

Basileia: Essays on Imperium and Culture

Byzantina Australiensia

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Basileia: Essays on Imperium and Culture

In Honour of E.M. Jeffreys and M.J. Jeffreys

Edited by

Geoffrey Nathan
Lynda Garland



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Εἰ δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀντιπόδων ἐπεξεργαστικώτερον θελήσειέ τις ζητῆσαι,
ῥαδίως τοὺς γράῳδεις μύθους αὐτῶν ἀνακαλύψει.

Cosmas Indicopleustes, I,20.

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Preface

The collection of studies published here began as a series of papers delivered at the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, held at the University of New South Wales in Sydney in February of 2008. The conference, held in honour of the eminent Byzantinists Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys, took as its theme “*Imperium* and Culture”, which also serves as the main subject of this volume. Elizabeth is Emeritus Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern languages, and an Emeritus Fellow of Exeter College. She is also an Honorary Fellow of St Anne’s College and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Michael still serves as quondam Sir Nicholas Laurentius Professor of Modern Greek at the University of Sydney and is a Researcher at the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity.

The Jeffreys’ reputation internationally and their long and warm association with Australian Byzantine Studies has resulted in the addition of contributions not originally included in the conference. The result, among other things, is to reinforce not only the quality of the essays here, but also to indicate a measure of our admiration and respect. Accordingly, both the authors and the editors collectively seek to honour Elizabeth and Michael for contributions to the field of Byzantine Studies spanning close to forty years, as well as their especial attachment to Australia.

This volume touches upon an enduring topic in modern postclassical historiography. The ways in which politics and culture intertwined in the Byzantine world has been a key and continually evolving area of research amongst historians, archaeologists, philologists and art and architectural historians. Interest not only in the academic world, but also recently among the general public – with major exhibitions at European and American museums – has served to encourage deeper exploration of the interplay between political power and various forms of cultural expression.

Within such an admittedly large subject for study, in recent years scholarship on Byzantine culture has unsurprisingly moved along in many different, although related trajectories. It would be difficult (and perhaps problematic!) to catalogue them all, but there are three broad areas of interest worth mentioning here that have sufficient prominence to be included in this collection.

An enduring and long held interest is the survival and redeployment of Classical civilisation in the Late Antique and Byzantine eras. As a kind of common cultural vocabulary among the privileged classes, the confluence of power, patronage and art served to reinforce legitimacy through the pedigree of *paideia* and *imperium*. The issue raised in the preface of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* by the dictionary’s editorial board is still at the heart of much of the current historiography: “the complex question of whether Byzantium was a living, developing organism or only a guardian of ancient and patristic traditions.”¹ While the answer to that question seems increasingly clear, that the Byzantine world did develop its own traditions and *mentalité*, traditional cultural ideas and forms were nevertheless favoured by the secular and religious elite as tools for social distinction, moral orthodoxy and political legitimacy. Several of the contributions included touch upon this very subject, including the breathtaking overview of Byzantine literature offered by Elizabeth and Michael’s dissection of Comnenoi political rhetoric. The use, reuse and reinvention of the Classical literature, intellectual thought, and artistic and architectural

¹ *ODB*, vol. 1, p. viii.

motifs (notably Hellenic), as well as the Roman imperial tradition, figure significantly in the scholarship.

A second area of interest has been the relationship between culture and city. The broader issues surrounding the disappearance of urban centres in the Middle Byzantine period and the general focus on church building in artistic and architectural studies have been supplemented in recent years by discussions of urbanism and the ideological function of building. Now a number of scholars here and abroad are exploring the ways in which the building activities of emperors and of elites articulated political, religious, and artistic agendas in the city of Constantinople and beyond. One of the most interesting questions concerning the ideological function of urban space has been the synchronic and diachronic struggles between emperors and aristocrats within the medium of built environment. Another important epistemological issue has been the redefinition of the city in the postclassical age.

Finally, the relationship between the powerful and the popular as context for studying these issues has also been an important part of the scholarly debate. Not only in church building and public monuments have scholars explored how craftsmanship has served as the handmaiden to political and personal imperatives, but more recently the exploration of lead seals, of brick stamps, and of course coins have provided new insights into the manner in which the upper classes deployed propagandistic iconography on a mass scale. Conversely, archaeological work done in Constantinople, parts of Italy and more broadly in the eastern Mediterranean are helping to create broader and deeper insights into the way in which the needs and interests of the non-elite mediated imperial and elite patronage of the arts. The development of Byzantine pottery, notably trans-regional influences on style and technique, can also serve to indicate how the interests of elites could be mediated and minimised by broader cultural and economic influences.

In many of these debates, Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys have taken no small part. Their continuing interests in the problem of popular writing in the Byzantine millennium, and how “official” Classical civilisation and its underlying values of tradition and mimesis had a stifling impact on the development of a thriving vernacular bears directly upon this publication’s themes. Their joint works on John Malalas and on popular literature have become indispensable standards of the fields. They are continuing their collaborative efforts on a current project on the court poetry of Manganeios Prodromus. Their individual research is equally significant. *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (2008), edited by Elizabeth along with Robin Cormack and John Haldon, has extensively advanced the historiography on a broad number of subjects. Michael’s encyclopaedic knowledge of Byzantine texts, and his familiarity especially with writing in the twelfth century has resulted in the publication of works on such diverse topics as the Second Crusade, the *Chronicle of Morea* and of course Byzantine metrics. He has recently headed up the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World* project (1025–1102). Even a brief glance at their publications (both together and separately), compiled here by Ann Moffatt for this collection, should be an indication of their formative influence in the study of Byzantine high and popular culture.

There are a number of people and groups that Lynda and I would like to thank. Both the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies (AABS) and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of New South Wales (FASS) offered initial subventions (repaid!) to help defray the costs of the Biennial Conference. Elizabeth and Michael wended their way Down Under from Oxford at their own expense to be honoured and to present their papers, something above and beyond the call of duty. The Executive committee for AABS has also been a strong advocate for the publication of the papers, as well as soliciting interest from other contributors. Vicki Panayatopolu-Douleveras, my former colleague at the University

of New South Wales and good friend, had a large hand in formulating the concept of *imperium* and culture as a subject for exploration. And Ann Moffatt, as mentioned above, has donated her time and energy to compile a complete, but in no way finished list of separate and joint publications of Elizabeth and Michael.

Geoffrey Nathan
Sydney, 2010

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina (Greek Anthology)</i> , ed. H. Stadtmüller (Leipzig 1894–1906)
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>CFHB</i>	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
<i>CSHB</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
<i>BSI</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i> , ed. P. Krueger (Berlin 1954 ¹¹)
<i>ClMed</i>	<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
<i>CSEL</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
<i>CTh</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> , ed. Th. Mommsen (Berlin 1962 ³)
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>FGH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , ed. F. Jacoby (Leiden 1954–64)
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i> .
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i> , ed. L. Jalabert et al. (Paris 1929–)
<i>ILCV</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>

<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
MGH <i>AA</i>	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, <i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
Nov. J.	Justinian, <i>Novellae</i> , ed. R. Schoell & W. Kroll, <i>Corpus Juris Civilis</i> 3 (Berlin 1954 ⁶)
<i>ODB</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , ed. A. Kazhdan et al, 3 vols (Oxford 1991)
<i>OCD</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , ed. S. Hornblower et al. (Oxford 1996 ³)
<i>OrChrAn</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completes, Series Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completes, Series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , ed. J.R. Martindale et al. (Cambridge 1970–1992).
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
<i>RSBN</i>	<i>Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>

BASILEIA

Michael and Elizabeth Jeffreys

Michael and Elizabeth, Elizabeth and Michael: whichever way you look at it they are a team. Together they threw their energies into the formation of a team of Byzantinists in Australia when they arrived in Sydney in 1976. Together they came back to Sydney for this *Imperium and Culture* conference to be honoured by members of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, which they had been instrumental in founding. It was with joy and a strong feeling of nostalgia that we officially welcomed them back.

True “Brits”, they are also true “Aussies”, with dual citizenship. They first met as undergraduates at the University of Cambridge, while watching the Australian tourists thrash the university’s cricket team; Michael was at Peterhouse and Elizabeth at Girton. After both graduated with Upper Seconds in Classics, Michael taught in London schools: in 1962 as teacher of English as a second language in a west London secondary modern, then from 1963 as a Classics Master at East Ham Grammar School. His PhD was done part-time at Birkbeck College in the University of London. Robert Browning, his supervisor and no shirker of hard work himself, spoke of him at the time with admiration. The thesis was, significantly, on “Studies in the Language and Style of the Mediaeval Greek *Chronicle of the Morea*”.

Significantly, because at the same time Elizabeth was at St Anne’s College in Oxford, working in the field of mediaeval Greek and French; her BLitt thesis was on the garden-castle theme in fourteenth-century romances. In 1965 they married and she then moved to London, at first to teach Classics at Mary Datchelor School in Camberwell; she then took up a Senior Research Fellowship at the Warburg Institute in the University of London from 1969 to 1972. Their first joint publication, “*Imberios and Margarona: the Manuscripts, Sources and Edition of a Byzantine Romance*”, was published in *Byzantion* in 1971.

In 1972 Michael was awarded his doctorate and they spent the two years from 1972 to 1974 as Visiting Fellows in turn at Harvard University’s Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in Washington DC. It was there that their daughter Katharine was born. There followed two important years, 1974–1976, with both of them appointed Research Fellows in the Arts Faculty in the University of Ioannina, Greece. They became fluent in Modern Greek and formed lasting friendships with their Greek colleagues, including Evangelos Chrysos.

Michael’s study in the 1970s of the *Chronicle of the Morea* and then the epic-romance *Digenis Akritis*, both in 15-syllable political verse, were pointers to two of his future interests, and his article, “The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse”, in the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* of 1974 remains one of the two fundamental studies of the 15-syllable metre. Elizabeth’s early work on an edition of the *War of Troy* was to have a sequel in Australia when she revisited the story in the account of Malalas.

In 1976 the Jeffreys arrived in Australia. Michael had been appointed lecturer, and subsequently senior lecturer and, in 1983, professor of Modern Greek in the University of Sydney. In the post-War period, many Greeks had migrated to Australia and by the 1970s Melbourne was said (with a little exaggeration) to be the third largest Greek-speaking city after Athens and Thessaloniki, and Sydney was not far behind. In response to enthusiastic fundraising by the Greek community, the University of Sydney started a teaching operation that resulted in a Department of Modern Greek. Dr Alfred Vincent and Michael were largely responsible for guiding it through those formative years, teaching from beginners’ level through to PhD. They found themselves occupied not just as teachers, but also as

sources of advice, called on by students' parents and others trying to negotiate a culture and bureaucracy that was unfamiliar. At the same time, they enjoyed the intense social and cultural life of the local Greek community while trying to steer a path through its divisive politics.

The Australian educational bureaucracy was also debating how to deal with students studying their parental languages. Setting the examination results of final year school students involved a major battle. Most students taking Modern Greek as a school subject came from Greek-speaking families (as in Italian, Spanish and so on). Not surprisingly, they often got higher scores in Greek than in other subjects. But this fell foul of a principle that no whole candidature in a subject should get a higher average mark than they all achieved in their other subjects, taken together. The principle was useful in comparing Chemistry and Biology, but not in "community" languages, which were unfairly marked down. The problem was solved by a reasonable compromise, but only after taking all Michael's research time for two years.

For the 1978 academic year, Elizabeth held a visiting fellowship in the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University in Canberra. Together she and Michael and Ann Moffatt, a lecturer in Classics there, co-convened the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference. The Australian Association for Byzantine Studies (AABS) was formed at that conference with a committee of members drawn from most states of Australia. Ihor Ševčenko, who was invited to Australia by the ANU as a Conference Visitor, participated actively in the conference, urged the formation of a National Committee, and duly supported the Australian group's application to become a member of the Association Internationale des Études Byzantines. He also encouraged the Centre to underwrite the publication of the conference papers, and so the series *Byzantina Australiensia* was launched.

Roger Scott, a Classics graduate of the University of Melbourne and then Cambridge, studying there at the same time as the Jeffreys but now back in Melbourne, had translated Book 18 of the sixth-century world chronicle of John Malalas as had, coincidentally, a group in Sydney. Roger and the Jeffreys joined forces and sought funding from the Australian Research Grants Scheme to produce a translation of the whole chronicle. They formed a team with six others from Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Armidale who, starting in 1982, met twice a year at the Jeffreys' home for a weekend's intensive study of the text and lively and sometimes passionate discussion. There would be lunch in the garden and then with lots of good humour the team went eagerly back to work, the sitting-room group working on the mythological books and the dining-room group on the historical books. Simon Franklin visited from Cambridge in 1984 to help with the surviving Slavonic version. By this time, a draft translation was ready, and much effort on the part of the Jeffreys went into collecting *testimonia* from the later chronicles to form a subtext and to complement the abbreviated version of the unique Oxford manuscript upon which the translation was based. The translation, typed and formatted in house, was published as *Byzantina Australiensia* vol. 4 in 1986.

The volume *Malalas Studies* followed in 1990, again a collaborative venture, but for which Elizabeth, helped by Roger Scott and Brian Croke, was largely responsible. These twelve chapters broke new ground in a hitherto little studied field. From their home base Elizabeth managed the distribution of the increasing number of volumes of *Byzantina Australiensia*. They were printed in Canberra and then ferried in the Jeffreys' little green hatchback down to Sydney to be stored in Michael's office and at home. While Michael managed the invoicing, Elizabeth did the packing and posting from the local post-office. The success of the series was largely due to their selfless efforts.

Elizabeth took a leading role in the Malalas project while also teaching part-time as opportunities arose at Macquarie and Sydney universities. At the same time, too, she established a formidable international reputation as a Byzantinist, publishing mediaeval vernacular Greek literature with a series of articles (on manuscript sources, romances and orality) that culminated in two major editions: in 1996, the *editio princeps* of *The War of Troy* (with M. Papathomopoulos), a fourteenth-century Greek verse romance based on Benoît de Ste Maure's *Roman de Troie*, and then an edition and translation of Digenis Akritis (1998) from both the Grottaferrata and Escorial manuscripts. There was also editorial work. She was the editor of *Parergon*, the journal of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, for the first eight volumes of its new and more professionally produced series (1983–1990). Likewise she instigated and edited the first three volumes (1993–1995) of the corresponding Australian and New Zealand journal *Modern Greek Studies*.

Elizabeth and Michael convened AABS' second conference in Sydney in 1980 on the theme "The Age of Justinian", thus setting the pattern for a biennial conference on a particular theme. For the spring of 1984, Elizabeth was back at Dumbarton Oaks as a Visiting Fellow. In May the next year she and Ann Moffatt convened the fourth AABS conference on "Byzantium and Hellenism" in conjunction with the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU in Canberra. Then in the years 1987–1995 Elizabeth held three part-time research fellowships to work on twelfth-century Byzantine texts and early Modern Greek material. The first, in 1987–1989, was awarded by the Australian Research Grants Committee through the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Melbourne. This was followed by two appointments to the Department of Modern Greek in the University of Sydney funded by the Australian Research Council, first as Research Fellow (1991–1992) and then as an Australian Senior Research Fellow (1993–1995).

Michael had contrived to work in the three areas of late antiquity, Byzantine language and romance literature, and Modern Greek. He, like Elizabeth, has been a founding member of the board of the journal *Oral Tradition* and, from 1987, was a Corresponding Member of the Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici. From 1990 to 1996, he was the foundation president of the Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand. He also early became the local authority on how to produce Ancient Greek on a Mac computer, entertaining an AABS conference in 1989 with a paper entitled "MacByz" and advising also on the best software for accessing the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. He produced in Sydney, with Vicki Doulaveras-Panayatopolou, simple published pamphlets listing facsimiles of manuscripts (1997) and bibliographies (4,000 lemmata, 1998) for early Modern Greek literature. He was awarded three Australian Research Council grants for his work on the poems of Manganeios Prodromos (1987–1990), for the corpus of manuscripts in early vernacular Modern Greek (1993–1995) and for electronic editions of Medieval Greek texts (1996–1998).

The Sevastokratorissa Eirene, wife of Manuel I Komnenos' brother Andronikos, the monk Iakovos and the poet Manganeios Prodromos all became familiar names for those attending AABS conferences. The Jeffreys' participation in other conferences in Australia was also noteworthy, presenting papers ranging from late antique historiography to nineteenth-century Greek nationalism. Their contributions to conferences in Europe is attested by their published conference papers listed in their bibliography in this volume, starting with the 14th International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Bucharest in 1971. Thirty-five years later, Elizabeth, with Anthony Bryer, convened the 21st International Congress in London and subsequently she edited the papers in three volumes.

In 1996, Elizabeth was appointed the Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

at the University of Oxford and a Professorial Fellow of Exeter College. The next six years involved commuting for them between Oxford and Sydney, helped by the fact that the northern and southern hemisphere academic years do not coincide. Elizabeth's teaching at Oxford for undergraduates centred on the medieval papers in the Final Honours School in Medieval and Modern Languages: for graduates, on the one-year Master of Studies and two-year MPhil degrees in Byzantine studies; and the supervision of doctoral theses (over a dozen in all). Her lecture courses and tutorials were on various aspects of Byzantine literature, with an emphasis on historiography, hagiography and vernacular literature. She retired from the chair in 2006.

By the end of 2000, Michael was able to resign from the chair in Sydney to return to England, where an unexpected opening appeared. John Martindale retired, having edited first *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire 330–641 AD* (1971–1992) and then the *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire 641–867* (published as a CD in 2001). A continuation was planned and Michael became editor of this next project, the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World (1025–1204)*. The territory to be dealt with was defined as at the death of Basil II—despite the inherent problems of the subsequent fragmentation of the Empire, the many sources in languages other than Greek, and the great number of lead seals. An initial on-line edition for 1025 to 1102 was produced with Tassos Papacostas in 2006, this time with all the data entered in small packets of input, to be recombined in answers to questions, rather than as static narratives on each person as in previous prosopographies. In 2008–2009 Michael held a Summer Fellowship at Dumbarton Oaks to study, with the help of John Nesbitt, their collection and other resources relating to lead seals. The prosopography is likely to be an abiding interest.

Since reunited in Oxford, Michael and Elizabeth have renewed their teamwork, publishing the letters of Iakovos and pressing on with further work on Manganeios Prodromos. They continue to respond to invitations to participate in international conferences, sharing their current research activities with a wider audience in the way we in Australia had appreciated from earlier in their careers. It was truly fitting, from our point of view, that in 1993, before either left Australia, both were elected Fellows of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Publications of Michael John Jeffreys and Elizabeth Mary Jeffreys

(excluding book reviews)

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- EJ "Constantine Hermoniakos and Byzantine Education", *Dodone* 4 (1975), 81–109 (rp. in M&EJ, *Popular Literature*, 1983).
 MJ "The Chronicle of the Morea: Priority of the Greek Version", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 68, Issue 2 (1975), 304–350.
 MJ "Digenis Akritas: Manuscript Z", *Dodone* 4 (1975), 163–201 (rp. in M&EJ, *Popular Literature*, 1983).
 MJ "The Literary Emergence of Vernacular Greek", *Mosaic* 8.4 (1975), 171–193.

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- EJ "The Popular Byzantine Verse Romances of Chivalry: Work Since 1971", *Mantatoforos* 13 (1979), 19–34.

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- MJ "Andonis Samarakis and his Literary Style", *To Yofiri* (Sydney) 9 (1980), 41–53.
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- EJ “Old Testament ‘History’ and the Byzantine Chronicle”, in P. Magdalino and R.S. Nelson (eds), *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia (Cambridge Mass. 2010), 153–174.
- MJ “Psellos and ‘his Emperors’: Fact, Fiction and Genre”, in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham 2010), 71–89.

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- EJ “Purple Prose? The Emperor and Literature”, in G. Nathan and L. Garland (eds), *Imperium and Culture* (Sydney 2010), 15–26.
- MJ “The Comnenian Emperor in his Versified Press-Releases”, in *ibid.*, 27–38.

Elizabeth Jeffreys

Purple Prose? The Emperor and Literature

What is meant by “literature” in Byzantium is a question that has no easy answer. From the time that study of Byzantine culture began to develop as an academic discipline – with the pioneering work, for example, of Du Cange (1610–1688), Fabricius (1668–1736), or the all-encompassing taxonomy of Krumbacher (1856–1909) – scholarship has favoured an inclusive definition, resulting in some uncomfortable juxtapositions and discussion by rigid categories.¹ More recently, urged on by Alexander Kazhdan (1922–1997), scholarly approaches have favoured the breaking down of formalistic divisions and have sought to analyse texts rather than describe them, a mini-revolution of the kind undergone in Classical Studies over the last few decades. Yet there still remain many issues about the production in Byzantium of literature, however defined, issues that need further debate. One involves the role of patronage in the creation, and then the preservation, of pieces of literary activity: this will have had an impact on the shape of the Byzantine literary heritage that has come down to us. The patron at the top of the social pyramid is the emperor. The conference whose papers are represented in this volume had as its theme “Imperium and Culture”. This paper responds to the theme by exploring some of the areas in which imperial literary patronage was exercised, taking as examples Justinian, Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Manuel Komnenos and Andronikos II Palaiologos. It will suggest that the way in which imperial patronage transcends the boundaries imposed by modern scholarship supports the need for a holistic approach, in a Byzantine context, to the definition of literature.

Byzantine literature has always had something of a confused reputation, and recently has been tossed around in the wake of the revolutions in literary studies that took place in the latter decades of the twentieth century, particularly in France and North America.² As is often lamented, changes in attitudes towards the interpretation of the literature of classical Greece and Rome have filtered through comparatively recently into Byzantine studies:³ this

¹ This paper was produced in the context of the 15th Conference of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies. I should like to thank the organisers, especially Geoff Nathan (and not forgetting the role of Vicky Doulavera-Panagiotopoulou), for their invitation to be present and to speak: it was memorable to be back in Sydney in the company of so many old and valued friends. The paper remains an essay that reflects the oral form of its initial delivery, and has limited annotation.

² Conspicuous in his urging in this direction was Alexander Kazhdan (though his volumes of literary history are curiously bloodless); similarly energetic was Jakov Ljubarsky (notably in his contribution in *Symbolae Osloenses* 73 [1998], 5–22: “Quellenforschung and/or literary criticism: narrative structures in Byzantine historical writing”), whilst vigorous promptings to make use of literary theory have come from Margaret Mullett (see now the papers collected in her *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium* [Aldershot 2007]). Volumes in the series *Dossiers Byzantins*, largely emanating from conferences organised by Paolo Odorico (Paris) and Panagiotis Agapitos (Cyprus), and others, chart some of the debates and the protagonists: see especially vols. 1, 4 and 6 (*Pour une «nouvelle» histoire de la littérature byzantine* [Paris 2002]; *Les vies des saints à Byzance: genre littéraire ou biographie historique?* [Paris 2004]; *Écriture de la mémoire: la littérarité de l'historiographie* [Paris 2006]).

³ The theorists most regularly invoked in connection with Byzantine studies include Genette, Bakhtin, and Kristeva. Historiography and the novels of the twelfth century (and to a lesser extent of the fourteenth) are the areas most often examined, with hagiography running a poor third. For a judicious

is yet another example of the way in which Byzantine philology, to use the term in its European sense, that is, extending beyond linguistics to literature, has been for too long Classics' poor relation. However, I would like to suggest that while the view that, in the manner of Krumbacher, takes a broad definition of literature in connection with Byzantium may not be so foolish as some want to make it seem, broad definitions should not be combined with rigid categorisations; while it should be recognised that compositional rules existed, and even genres to which rules could be applied, rules – and genres – could be treated flexibly in Byzantium.⁴ One way to find a perspective on this is through a consideration of some of the mechanisms of literary production and their effect on what was produced.

One of the key mechanisms behind the literature of Byzantium is arguably patronage. Patronage is a term much bandied around; it is open to many definitions, and abuses. What is applicable in this paper is the concept of “mecenatismo”, as opposed to “clientelismo”, to use F.W. Kent's terminology;⁵ that is, the sponsoring of cultural endeavours as opposed to the development of political networks (granted that the one might well at times blend into the other). Patronage of the arts, and of their corollary, scholarship, was as vital in the ancient and medieval worlds as it is today, and while it has been a fashionable topic in the recent past for students of the medieval West, its role in Byzantium has not received the overall discussion it merits.⁶ In Australian terms, one thinks of the roles played by, and the very real support offered by, the Australian Research Council, the Arts Councils in each state, and the benefactors and sponsors both corporate and individual listed, for example, in theatre programmes. In the ancient world their parallels can be seen in Maecenas and Virgil, Kallimachos and the Alexandrian Ptolemies, Peisistratos with the Panathenaia and the Homeric rhapsodes. This somewhat random roll-call hints at a shift in the modern world in the sources of benefaction – from individuals to the state, though this does not mean that individuals do not continue to have a significant role (ranging from Bill Gates to the London Greek ship-owners with many points in between). But the fact that such lists can be produced also shows that there is an on-going role for patronage and benefactions. Given this prevalence, why should Byzantine society be any different?

What does patronage do? It is an economic transaction, from which all parties hope to benefit. It is a sad, hard fact that any writer or scholar needs a roof over her head, bread on

overview of the possibilities and pitfalls, see P. Agapitos, “Literary Criticism”, in the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. Jeffreys, with J. Haldon and R. Cormack (Oxford 2008), 71–85. For judicious remarks in connection with classical studies, see D. Feeney, “Criticism Ancient and Modern”, in D. Innes, H. Hine and C. Pelling (eds), *Ethics and Rhetoric* (Oxford 1995), 301–313: all criticism is “historically sited”.

⁴ From the twelfth century Manganeios Prodromos, a very self-conscious writer, provides many examples of genre-awareness: what topics are appropriate for encomia (see especially poem 6), what occasions demand the use of verse (notably laments: see poem 65; references are to the forthcoming edition by E. and M. Jeffreys. For a useful list of Manganeios' works, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I 1143–1181* [Cambridge 1993], 494–500). The argument underlying Panagiotis Roilos' *Amphoteroglossia: a Poetics of the Twelfth-Century Medieval Greek Novel* (Cambridge, Mass. 2005) is that Byzantine literary genres could be stirred together with enthusiasm.

⁵ F.W. Kent and P. Simon (eds), *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford 1987), 2, with reference to G. Lanziti's discussion at pp. 299–311.

⁶ While there is some interest in literary patronage in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries to which the entry in the *ODB*, s.v. “Patrons and patronage”, offers some pointers, there are no studies of the scope of, for example, F.W. Kent and P. Simon cited in n. 4 or G.F. Lytle and S. Orgel (eds), *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1981). The forthcoming volume, *Female Founders*, ed. M. Grünbart, M. Mullett and L. Theis (to appear in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 60 [2011]) will offer some perspectives.

the table, and clothes on her children's backs. It is also a sad, hard fact that an A.S. Byatt or a Richard Dawkins are rare phenomena: that is, fine writing does not always, or even usually, produce a living wage, nor do scholarly investigations, that is, research. So, bargains are struck.⁷ Sometimes the equation is blatant: in the medieval world a rousing speech of support translates into a hefty one-off fee, or adequately paid long-term employment as part of a patron's household. Sometimes the balance is less tangible. Who benefited in the sixth century when Kosmas Indikopleustes produced a fully illustrated tract setting out his views on the structure of the cosmos? It can be said that he was contributing to a theological debate, but whence came the resources to fund his leisure for writing and the materials for his illustrations? Today who benefits from a nicely crafted thesis on the genitive case in Aristophanes? It can be said in particular that this is a contribution to a twenty-first century understanding of ancient Greek syntax, but in general to whom, and how, does a greater benefit accrue? Questions like these produce some of the more contorted elements in ARC applications, in the sections marked "National Benefit"; and the pressure to produce answers under headings of this type is unlikely to go away.

We would agree, I suppose, on the principles of patronage: that the patron receives a service, and the patronised is given support. But why do the patronised believe that the services that they offer are worthy of support? That formulation, however, elides several stages, and imposes a modern construct that is not necessarily fully applicable to medieval (or pre-modern) societies. There the pattern is arguably that a patron perceives the need for a certain service and seeks out a practitioner; that is to say, the pre-modern pattern is more likely to be patron-led than patronised-led. The modern process is the reverse: the would-be beneficiaries of patronage tout their wares, seeking support.⁸ Hence, in today's society, the romantic answer to why support is sought would be that there is an urge for self-expression in the mode of activity for which support is sought. These modes may involve composition with words and paint, or research and the posing and answering of questions. The more pragmatic answer to why the patronage is sought would be that these activities are esteemed, the practising of them brings status, and with status come benefits.⁹ The patronised-driven search for support, driven from below, as it were, is based on a sense of the self-worth of the individual and a sense of the value and benefit of the activity. The pre-modern, patron-led, pattern fully acknowledges the value and benefit of the activity, but is less concerned with the individual practitioner.

Most of what can be said about patronage applies as much to painting and other crafts as it does to the craft of words, in other words, literature. But this essay will leave painting (whether on panels, walls or manuscripts) and sculpture (whether free-standing or in architectural settings) out of consideration: in Byzantium practitioners in these areas never advanced beyond craft status and, with very few exceptions, remained anonymous. Craftsmen with words could also remain anonymous – one example would be the group in the fourteenth century who wrote vernacular verse romances; but very many did not. I would suggest that the majority of texts from the Byzantine period that have survived have

⁷ There are pertinent points in J. Caskey, "Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art", in C. Rudolph (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe* (Oxford 2006), 193–212.

⁸ Though increasingly government-funded research grants are being directed towards specific categories of perceived need (a pressure that has increased in the period that this paper has been in press).

⁹ Whether the service or benefit is tangible or intangible (the "symbolic capital" of Pierre Bourdieu, as formulated in his *La Distinction* [Paris 1979]).

authorial names attached.¹⁰ Why? What special quality was attached to the craft of words that created a demand for the recognition of the individual?

I suppose the answer is that words communicate ideas: the more effectively words are used the more effective the communication. Hence, in brief, the success of the first sophists, who showed participants in the assemblies and law courts of the world of classical Greece how to present their arguments (even if this led to accusations of making the lesser cause seem the greater) – a success which, one might say, has reverberated ever since given that the rhetoric developed by the sophists still underpins our verbal discourse today.¹¹ This rhetoric formed the backbone of Byzantine curricula in the equivalent of the higher levels of secondary schooling and at tertiary level.¹² In fact, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that rhetoric formed the only subject on the curriculum.

The skills produced – the ability to discourse accurately and persuasively – were valued and could be the key to a successful career, secular or ecclesiastical.¹³ Hence, there is a regular pattern in Byzantium of intelligent young men from indigent families sticking to their books in order to better themselves – like John Lydus in the sixth century; or parents pushing their able offspring to be diligent students – as Psellos' mother did in the eleventh century, or the family of the Choniates brothers in the twelfth. Admittedly the desired results were not always achieved: in the mid-twelfth century John Tzetzes and Theodore Prodromos both lamented that for all their years of book learning they were still poorer than the artisans who were their neighbours, while in the fourteenth century Manuel Philes composed eloquent pleas for practical support – a cloak, and a horse.¹⁴ All these, however, come from periods when there was a superfluity of highly trained literary practitioners so the normal fit of supply to demand was out of balance. And moreover there is also more than a hint of rhetorical overkill:¹⁵ from other comments that they let drop we know that all these figures had adequate incomes from other resources. There was also another side to this situation. If intelligent young men and their families perceived book-learning as a means of advancement in state administration, those responsible for the smooth running of the administration saw the need to foster a steady supply of such people – hence the various attempts by emperors and patriarchs to set up institutions of higher education in Constantinople, for which we have most information from early and then late Byzantium. Whether or not they could be called universities, they provided a training in the higher branches of rhetoric and philosophy, law and medicine, and theology. But the greatest emphasis was on skills in rhetoric, and the correct use of words. What was offered in the

¹⁰ Even if hagiographical material is included.

¹¹ See the perspectives offered in I. Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford 2007).

¹² On Byzantine education, see now most conveniently, A. Markopoulos in the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (as in n. 3 above), 785–794.

¹³ Although the purveyors of the skills were not necessarily respected. Byzantine school-masters' complaints about unruly pupils verge on being a topos, with instances ranging from Photios, through the anonymous tenth-century school-master to Tzetzes and Manuel Philes.

¹⁴ The most vivid statements appear in the *Ptochoprodromika* (ed. H. Eideneier, *Ptochoprodromus* [Cologne 1991]), which are almost certainly from the pen of Theodore Prodromos.

¹⁵ As has been argued for the twelfth century by R. Beaton, "The Rhetoric of Poverty: the Lives and Opinions of Theodore Prodromus", *BMGS* 11 (1987), 1–28 (though his views on the identities of the poets known as Prodromos must be treated with caution); for the fourteenth, see I. Sevckenko, "Society and Intellectual Life in the Fourteenth Century", *XIVe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* (Bucarest 1971), *Rapports I*, 7–30.

first place was a sound knowledge of grammar, correct declensions and appropriate choice of vocabulary.¹⁶

So, having commented on patronage, the craft of words and rhetoric, and the relation of this to education in Byzantium, how does literature come in? Indeed, what is literature? A minimalist definition that I used once, with Michael, in connection with a research project into literature in early Modern Greek was “anything intended to be read more than once”, which excluded shopping lists but included virtually everything else; this was perhaps an extreme position. Then, is a written text a pre-requisite for a crafted set of words to be classed as literature? Does “literature” have to be written down? Is the concept of Oral Literature an oxymoron?¹⁷ It is often useful to look at a dictionary definition. The Concise Oxford Dictionary has two meanings under “literature”: literature is a) the writings of a country or a period, and b) writings whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect. One problem with recent debates about approaches to Byzantine literature is that the second definition is all too often assumed to be the only possible one; certainly this is the one that today prevails in academic departments of literary studies. The first definition, the taxonomic one that refers to the writings of a country or period, is ignored or derided. In practice it is this definition that has to date governed the construction of the reference books (such as there are) on Byzantine literature. I suppose one might say that this first definition covers literary history, and the second covers literary criticism; it would certainly be fair to say that studies on Byzantine literature have traditionally been stronger on history than criticism.

I would like to suggest that when we look at the role of literature in Byzantium, it is helpful to have a pragmatic approach. One should bear in mind that Byzantine writers more often than not did not indulge in emotive free expression but crafted words for specific purposes. These purposes included making demonstrations of their expertise in order to attract the attention of potential employers, who could also be defined as patrons.¹⁸ I would suggest that an appreciable portion of what we think of as Byzantine literature was produced to demonstrate skill to a patron, using well-established and conventional genres.¹⁹ However, a patron can influence what is presented to him or her by making requests, or by showing preferences. Given all this, given the pyramidal nature of Byzantine society one might expect the emperor to be an extremely effective patron, if not the most effective patron of all. Was he?

In what follows I review some case studies: the emperors Justinian, Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Manuel Komnenos, and Andronikos II Palaiologos.

Justinian: in the course of the sixth century, much of which was covered by Justinian’s reign, there was produced a great deal of what, by any definition, would be accepted as literature.²⁰ If we start with history we find Procopius and his ample output on Justinian’s

¹⁶ F. Ciccolella, *Donati Graeci: Learning Greek in the Renaissance* (Leiden 2008) offers a good survey of Byzantine teaching tools.

¹⁷ This is a personal dilemma: much of the Jeffreys’ academic life has been spent examining texts which retain the stylistic markers of oral poetic composition.

¹⁸ Other pragmatic points that are relevant to the understanding of the Byzantine literary scene would include the publication process (manuscript production, book trade, performance) and levels of literacy.

¹⁹ As I argued recently in connection with the twelfth century: “Why Produce Verse in Twelfth-Century Constantinople?”, in P. Odorico (ed.), *«Doux remède ...» Poésie et poétique à Byzance* (Paris 2009), 219–228.

²⁰ As well demonstrated by Claudia Rapp, “Literary Culture under Justinian”, in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 376–397. For editions of the writers and texts mentioned in what follows, consult H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane*

Wars – Vandal, Persian, Gothic – not to mention his excursus into more arcane matters in the *Secret History*; Malalas and his chronicle with its several editions between the 530s and 560s; Agathias, writing in the reign of Justinian's successor, but covering the last years of the former's reign.²¹ At this stage, ecclesiastical matters were still kept separate from secular history, so Theodore Anagnostes cobbled together a church history from the fifth century writers and brought it up to date. To continue to poetry: much was produced. Amongst some of the last gasps of the receding world of classical antiquity we find Paul the Silentiary, with his eulogistic and virtuoso account of Hagia Sophia and his amazingly racy epigrams, and Agathias, whose epigrams were even racier (capable of shocking even today's sophisticated youth). For the values of the new we can turn to Romanos the Melode and his kontakia, hymns with their stylistic roots in poetic forms in Syriac and hugely effective for congregational uses.²² For antiquarian investigations we can turn to John Lydus, though he might have preferred the label "scholarly".²³ For theological explorations I have mentioned already Kosmas Indikopleustes, though more formal theologians such as the patriarch Eutychios might well have found Kosmas' book verging on the lunatic fringe of theological speculation. Finally, Agapetos in his *Ekthesis*, the first Mirror of Princes, counselled the emperor on his relationship with both God and his subjects.

But how much was Justinian involved with the production of these texts? I think the response has to be that it was much less than one might expect. In the case of Agapetos' *Ekthesis*, which was addressed to the emperor: had Justinian requested this or did he merely endure it once produced? Paul the Silentiary would not have unprompted expended time and effort to celebrate the inauguration of Great Church in his complex formal ekphrasis, but the patriarch gets equal billing with the emperor and the performance was probably as much in the patriarchate as the Great Church itself.²⁴ Procopius was more closely involved with Belisarios than with the emperor, though clearly Belisarios and Antonina were close to Justinian and Theodora: but the hero of most of the *Wars* is Belisarios. Procopius' attitude to Justinian is notoriously ambivalent, as a rapid reading of the *Secret History* reveals. But the natural assumption that the laudatory nature of the *Buildings* implies a client-patron relationship between Justinian and the author is hard to confirm from the text itself.²⁵ Romanos may allude to the imperial couple in his kontakion known as "On the Earthquake and Fire" but he seems to have otherwise operated with independence. Kosmas had a Syrian patriarch in the background, and anyway was functioning out of Alexandria.²⁶ As for Malalas, who was also initially operating away from Constantinople, in Antioch, there is no sign of any sponsor or patron anywhere in his chronicle.²⁷ John Lydus' career was given its first boost by his future father-in-law Zoticus, on the basis of John's fine writing;

Literatur der Byzantiner, 2 vols. (Munich 1978) and, for work after 1978, the *ODB* and, most recently, the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*.

²¹ On these usefully, but irritatingly (the interpretation of Malalas is eccentric), see W.T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke 2007).

²² Rapp (as in n. 19) brings out well the juxtapositions of old and new forms in this period.

²³ M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London 1992).

²⁴ R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, "The Architecture of *ekphrasis*: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia", *BMGS* 12 (1988), 47–82.

²⁵ On the *Buildings*, see the papers in C. Roueché (ed.), *De Aedificiis: le texte de Procope et les réalités* (= *Antiquité tardive* 8 [2000]).

²⁶ The forthcoming monograph by Maja Kominko will offer a new contextualisation for Kosmas' *Christian Topography*.

²⁷ See P. Odorico, "L' uomo nuovo di Cosma Indicopleusta e di Giovanni Malalas", *BSI* 56 (1995), 305–315 for an illuminating comparison between Kosmas and Malalas.

imperial support in later life came indirectly. As for Agathias and the epigrams, written in the reign of Justinian even if published later – these seem to have been self-instigated, as it were: skills were being practised and shown off, but the audience came from his peers and not potential imperial patrons. There is indeed patronage: I have just mentioned Zoticus, and Agathias acknowledges the helpful encouragement of Eutychianus in turning him towards the writing of history when his heart was really with his poetry. So the mechanism of sponsorship is, as one would expect, attested. But why this dearth of reference to the emperor? Is it due to his personality? Is it a part of Justinian's uncouth Illyrian background? Or part of his concentration on the processes of government? The reworking of the law codes is after all firmly sheeted home to Justinian, even if the labour fell to others.²⁸ The contrasts with recent and later emperors are striking: Anastasios, a cultured civil servant, had several poets associated with him and his court,²⁹ and Herakleios made use of the talents of George of Pisidia (as admittedly did the patriarch Sergios).³⁰ But imperial literary tastes do not seem to have counted for much in the central years of the sixth century. It may well be that the blank years in the late 550s–565 are to be interpreted as the result of a Justinianic reign of terror. However, it does seem to be a valid conclusion that although Justinian was active in administration and legislation, he does not seem to have actively commissioned literary works, nor does he seem to have encouraged displays of literary wares in order to advance careers. If the sixth century has a high profile in today's perception of literary Byzantium, then it is not due to Justinian.

Leaping over the centuries, to the tenth century, Constantine Porphyrogenetos is a completely different matter. Erudite, burying himself – perforce – in books (and paintings), he took an interventionist line with commissions, arguably imposing a distinct profile on the literary products of his century. This is most obvious in the writing of histories. The biographies that make up the collection conventionally if awkwardly known as Theophanes Continuatus acknowledge Constantine's active commissioning.³¹ Whether one should believe the claims of Book V, the *Vita Basilii*, that he intervened to the extent of authorship himself, is another matter. Constantine's dynastic anxieties led him to extend his white-washing commissions, for – strangely – Genesios seems to have been given the same brief as the author, or authors, of the biographies in the Theophanes Continuatus series, though all seem to have worked independently from the same source materials. Then there are the Constantinian Excerpts, a massive collection of filleted passages on useful topics from historians ancient and Byzantine.³² The commission again was Constantine's, but why? Was it simply to tidy up the messy welter of manuscripts hanging around in the wake of the transliteration revolution produced by the invention of a new style of writing, the minuscule? But other writings to which Constantine's name is attached and in which his intervention, if not sole authorship, is certain, also show a similar mentality – to collect and unify. I refer to the *De administrando imperio*, the *De thematibus* and most conspicuously

²⁸ The classic study is T. Honoré, *Tribonian* (London 1978), but see also the comments in C. Humfress, "Law and Legal Practice", in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 161–184.

²⁹ F. Nicks, "Literary Culture in the Reign of Anastasius I", in S. Mitchell and G. Greatrex (eds), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London 2000), 183–203.

³⁰ See, for example, Mary Whitby, "George of Pisidia and the Persuasive Word: Words, words, words ...", in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 173–186.

³¹ For a recently published overview, see A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)* (Athens 2006), vol. 2, 133–152.

³² B. Flusin, "Les *Excerpta* constantiniens et la *Chronique* de Malalas", in J. Beaucamp (ed.), *Recherches sur la Chronique de Jean Malalas* (Paris 2004), 119–136, offers interesting procedural insights on their production.

the *De Caerimoniis*.³³ This encyclopaedic cast of mind stamped itself on the century: one should not overlook the *Geoponica* or the *Hippiatrica*.³⁴ It spilled over into hagiography. While the metaphrastic encyclopaedic rewriting of the Menologion is most unlikely to have been commissioned in the reign of Constantine rather than that of his grandson Basil II,³⁵ saints' lives were affected by this movement: the lives of Andrew the Fool or Basil the Younger can be read as compendia of moralistic monastic teachings – in fact if they are not read in this way it is almost impossible to make sense of them.³⁶ So I think that – in these broad brush terms – a good case can be made that this emperor did have an impact on literary production, even though there were other patrons – like Basil the Parakoimomenos, Constantine's bastard step-brother. But what about the pattern of vying competitors? We do not have from this century the caterwaul of complaints from disappointed applicants that we hear in later centuries, though we do have the eloquent miseries of the anonymous schoolmaster.³⁷ Is it that for this period the supply of the rhetorically trained more or less matched the demand? Lemerle's much rehearsed calculation that there were only ever some two hundred *literati* in Constantinople who were competent at the highest linguistic level derives from tenth-century evidence.³⁸ We only hear about the winners but the patronage pattern is at work.

Another leap, this time to the twelfth century. Here without a doubt supply outstrips demand and patronage patterns can be seen clearly. Who then are the clients, those wanting patronage? From the early years of the twelfth century and the reign of John Komnenos there is a noticeable number of young men in Constantinople seeking employment. Tzetzes was mentioned earlier: he had acquired employment (in some kind of secretarial capacity) with a provincial governor on the basis of his literary skills, and then lost this position through a personal indiscretion; subsequently he was compelled to use those skills teaching ungrateful boys basic grammar whilst pleading for lucrative commissions by making bravura displays of verbal dexterity.³⁹ His targets included the emperor Manuel's German-born wife Bertha-Eirene for whom he allegorized the *Iliad*, though in the fifteen-syllable verse rather than hexameters. Or alternatively these young (though not always young) men are seeking some benefit in kind. An excellent example of this is provided by the otherwise anonymous poet, mentioned earlier and conventionally known as Manganeios Prodromos.⁴⁰ His most passionate desire was to be granted a place in the hospice in the Mangana monastery, and so he bombarded the emperor Manuel chiefly, but others too, with petitions,

³³ On the first two, see J. Howard-Johnston, "The *de administrando imperio*: a Re-examination of the Text and a Re-evaluation of its Evidence about the Rus", in M. Kazanski, A. Nersessian, and C. Zuckerman (eds), *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient* (Paris 2000), 301–336. In advance of the delayed French edition Ann Moffatt's translation of the *De Caerimoniis* is eagerly anticipated.

³⁴ Much use of the *Geoponica* is made in M. Decker, *Tilling the Hateful Earth: Agricultural Production and Trade in the Late Antique East* (Oxford 2009). On the *Hippiatrica*, see now A. McCabe, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia of Horse Medicine: the Sources, Compilation and Transmission of the Hippiatrica* (Oxford 2007).

³⁵ C. Högel, *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization* (Copenhagen 2002).

³⁶ See especially P. Magdalino, "What we heard in the Lives of the Saints we have seen with our own Eyes": the Holy Man as Literary Text in Tenth-Century Constantinople", in J. Howard-Johnston and R. Hayward (eds), *The Cult of the Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford 1999), 83–112.

³⁷ As edited now in A. Markopoulos (ed.), *Anonymi professoris epistulae* (Berlin 2000).

³⁸ P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (Paris 1971), 255–257.

³⁹ The best statement of John Tzetzes' life and works remains that by C. Wendel in *Pauly-Wissowa Realencyclopädie*, vol. 7 (Berlin 1914), cols. 1958–2011.

⁴⁰ See n. 4 above.

and ingratiating pleas of considerable verbal ingenuity. Where did Manganeios, the Tzetzes brothers, Niketas Eugenianos, Constantine Manasses – to name but a few of those productive at this time – acquire their skills? In the early years of the century partly from private teachers, but then from the Patriarchal Academy which was put on a sound footing by Alexios I (in 1107), with teachers who may have specialized in theology but who also looked to secular texts from the classical tradition.⁴¹ Alexios' intention would have been to ensure a good supply of ecclesiastical and secular civil servants to cope with the state's bureaucracy. Enough of those who went through the literary education provided by the Patriarchal Academy and by private teachers were sufficiently successful to encourage others in their aspirations – Constantine Manasses who, according to the older literature, ended up a bishop with a side-line in diplomacy is a possible example.⁴² But what eventually arose was a superfluity of supply over the demand coming from official sources.

Thus an interesting situation had developed. Imperial action intended nothing more revolutionary than to ensure a regular supply of competent bureaucrats to fill posts, secular and ecclesiastic, as needed. But the situation becomes competitive as individuals attempt to promote themselves and their skills over those of their peers. The patron has posts on offer. The clients offer – what? Encomia to praise the potential patron; neatly constructed speeches to mark an occasion in the patron's family life, often using verse; or a carefully crafted pastiche of a classical genre – an essay in the style of Lucian, a fragment of tragic *stichomythia*, an ekphrasis embedded in narrative, a pastiche of a novel.⁴³ Or perhaps in a really daring attempt to catch the patron's attention the client breaks the mould entirely, and bursts into the vernacular,⁴⁴ with presumably an impact much like that of Eliza Doolittle's "Not bloody likely" on the London stage in 1913. All these references are to texts that appear in Constantinople in the middle years of the twelfth century.

So who are the patrons at this time? Certainly the emperor, most notably Manuel for whom there survive encomia, songs, and petitions. For Manuel's father John Theodore Prodromos wrote encomiastic verse – but in an official capacity rather than touting for custom. But what is striking is the amount of text directed towards other members of the imperial family – to Manuel's mother Eirene-Piroshka, his wife Bertha-Eirene, his sister Anna, his brother-in-law Nikephoros Bryennios, his brother Andronikos, his sister-in-law Eirene. Members of Manuel's court were also amongst those to whom verbal displays were directed: Stephanos Kontostephanos, George Palaiologos, Roger Dalassenos amongst others.⁴⁵ Much of this is encomiastic and celebratory verse for personal events, or epigrams for inscription on objects for use in churches, icon veils, chalices and patens. But not all: texts produced in these circumstances also include a novel, a chronicle, a retelling of the

⁴¹ On Alexios' educational reforms, see P. Magdalino, "The Reform Edict of 1107", in M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds), *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast 1996), 199–218.

⁴² On Manasses' career, see O. Lampsidis, "Zur Biographie von K. Manasses und zu seiner *Chronike Synopsis*", *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 97–111.

⁴³ More precisely: the *Timarion*; *Christos Paschon*; Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike*, lines 27–285, on Creation (cf. I. Nilsson, "Narrating Images in Byzantine Literature: the ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses", *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 55 (2005), 121–146; Theodore Prodromos, *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*.

⁴⁴ The most successful attempt being the Ptochoprodromic poems. For an interesting analysis of Glykas' attempt at incorporating the vernacular, see E. Bourbouhakis, "'Political' Personae: the Poem from Prison of Michael Glykas. Byzantine Literature between Fact and Fiction", *BMGS* 31 (2007), 53–75.

⁴⁵ See Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel*, 323–356 and the tables at 510–512, for the producers and recipients of this material.

Iliad, and a Greek grammar.⁴⁶ All of these have a sub-text about employment for the writer either through the production of this text or as a result of it. Much of this literary material would have been displayed in *theatra*, or literary salons, in private houses.⁴⁷ The relationship which produces the most insights into this situation is that between Manganeios Prodromos and the Sevastokratorissa Eirene.⁴⁸

So did the emperors have any impact on the literature of this period? Note that the first three-quarters of the twelfth century was a period of considerable literary innovation. Was, for example, Manuel's patronage different from that of other contemporary patrons? In one way, yes: the huge theological encyclopaedias – Kamateros' *Sacred Arsenal* and Choniates' *Treasury of Orthodoxy* – are voluminous compendia that only the emperor could commission, and one is probably right to surmise that their authors undertook their composition with reluctance. In another way, no. Of the reams of encomia and so forth celebrating births, deaths and marriages, what was offered to Manuel was no different from what was offered to, say, a Kontostephanos, though perhaps the gaudy décor that seems to have accompanied a Komnenian aristocratic wedding escalated as the social scale was climbed. On the other hand, of the innovations for which the twelfth century is known, the use of the vernacular has a distinctly imperial slant: Glykas in his *Verses from Prison* and the anonymous Spaneas poem are directed to the emperor, but the satires (the *Ptochoprodromika*, by Theodore Prodromos) were dedicated to Manuel's brother as well as to Manuel himself, and also to his father the emperor John. So perhaps one can see here a glimpse of a writer-client acknowledging imperial taste – pandering to an imperial taste for things western which certainly, in Manuel's case, included jousts and may possibly have stretched to western uses of the vernacular.⁴⁹ The other literary innovation from the twelfth century which has caught modern scholarly attention concerns the four novels. Here there are some signs of a patronage role: Theodore Prodromos dedicated his *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* to a Caesar, who is almost certainly Nikephoros Bryennios, Manuel's brother-in-law.⁵⁰ But there are no signs of direct imperial involvement. It is worth noting that these novels are, *par excellence*, display pieces in which aspiring employees can flaunt literary skills – mastery not only of an antique genre (the novel) but also of the smaller rhetorical elements (*ekphrasis*, *ethopoia*, *gnome*) embedded within it.⁵¹

The place of historiography in this scene is intriguing, and puzzling. Manuel's reign is covered by two major writers: somewhat eulogistically by Kinnamos, his former secretary,

⁴⁶ More precisely: Theodore Prodromos' *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* for Nikephoros Bryennios, Constantine Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike* for the sevastokratorissa Eirene, John Tzetzes' *Allegories on the Iliad* for the empress Bertha-Eirene, and Theodore Prodromos' *Grammar* also for the sevastokratorissa Eirene.

⁴⁷ As discussed in M. Mullett, "Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople", in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford 1984), 173–201 and Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel*, 336–341.

⁴⁸ On which and on whom the Jeffreys have written already (see, for example, E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys, "Who was Eirene the Sevastokratorissa", *Byzantion* 64 [1994], 40–68) and propose to write further; see also now E. and M. Jeffreys (eds), *Iacobi Monachi epistulae* (Turnhout 2009), and E.M. Jeffreys, "The Sevastokratorissa Eirene as Patron", in *Female Founders* (forthcoming, as in n. 6 above).

⁴⁹ This phrase glides over a large area of scholarly debate, hints at which can be seen in Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel*, 392–403.

⁵⁰ E.M. Jeffreys, "A Date for Rhodanthe and Dosikles?", in P. Agapitos and D. Reinsch (eds), *Der Roman im Byzanz der Komnenzeit* (Frankfurt am Main 2000), 127–136; Roilos, *Amphoteroglossia*, 11.

⁵¹ I. Nilsson, *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' "Hysmine and Hysminias"* (Uppsala 2001) offers many insights into this essentially intertextual process.

and with disillusioned asperity by Niketas Choniates, a senior bureaucrat writing in the years after Manuel's death.⁵² Manuel's father John received only the scantiest of coverage in the two historians of his son's reign while the grand narrative of Manuel's grandfather's achievements did not appear for some forty years after Alexios' death. There seems little sign of these emperors attempting to manipulate the record to their advantage: in the case of Alexios it was his wife, Eirene Doukaina, who commissioned her son-in-law Nikephoros Bryennios to write on Alexios' adolescent exploits in the *Hyle Historias* and his daughter, Anna Komnene, who in the *Alexiad* defended his memory lest it be eclipsed by his grandson Manuel.⁵³

On the basis of points such as these, one could argue that Manuel's role as a potential source of patronage in the literary scene of the twelfth century was effective: clients bent their styles to suit what was perceived as imperial taste. However, the emperor's impact was not necessarily greater than that of other patrons lower down the social hierarchy.

Let us leap again to the late thirteenth and early to mid-fourteenth centuries. After the hiatus induced by the sack of Constantinople in 1204 and the retreat to Nicaea, there followed another period of noticeable literary production. There are histories: George Akropolites, Nikephoros Gregoras, John Kantakouzenos, produced by writers of solid (even imperial) status and not seeking for financial support, though they all had self-promotional agendas in mind. There are speeches and rhetorical productions from, amongst others, Theodore Metochites and Gregoras.⁵⁴ Metochites in fact provides a nice demonstration of how literary competence could override all manner of handicaps (in his case a father exiled for wrong beliefs): Andronikos II was so impressed by the young man's oratorical skills at their first meeting that he offered him a job on the spot.⁵⁵ There was also encomiastic and occasional poetry, of which the prime practitioner was Manuel Philes. Furthermore, there was wide-ranging scholarship covering mathematics and astronomy as well as the usual philological investigations:⁵⁶ the most prominent figures were Maximos Planoudes, Metochites, and Nikephoros Choumnos. Perhaps the liveliest literary activity, from a standpoint in the twenty-first century, were the romances, in verse and in a form of the vernacular, with no patron in sight, though one might suggest a court environment for their production.⁵⁷ What is truly amazing about this Palaiologan intellectual renaissance, which was accompanied by an equally remarkable one in the graphic arts, is that it took place

⁵² Zonaras, writing in the late 1140s, arguably with knowledge of the *Alexiad*, shares the asperity later demonstrated by Choniates but directs it towards Alexios.

⁵³ James Howard-Johnston's argument that the *Alexiad* owes more to Nikephoros than to Anna ("Anna Komnene and the *Alexiad*", in Mullett and Smythe (eds), *Alexios I Komnenos*, 260–301) has provoked indignant rebuttals; see the papers in T. Gouma-Peterson, *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York 2000).

⁵⁴ See D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge 2007) for a thoughtful appraisal of the subversive possibilities offered by formal presentations.

⁵⁵ I. Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of his Time", in P. Underwood, (ed.), *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (London, 1975), 17–91, at 25–26.

⁵⁶ See N. Gaul, *Thomas Magistros (um 1280–um 1347/48) und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Bemerkungen zum städtischen Humanismus in der frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Wiesbaden 2011); E.B. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261–c. 1360)* (Leiden 2000) is also useful.

⁵⁷ R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance*, 2nd ed. (London 1996); P.A. Agapitos, "Genre, Structure and Poetics in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances of Love", *Symbolae Osloenses* 79 (2004), 7–54; E. M. Jeffreys, "Medieval Greek Epic Poetry", in K. Reichl (ed.), *Medieval Oral Literature* (de Gruyter Lexikon; Berlin 2011).

within a shrinking and increasingly impoverished state.⁵⁸ The emperor who presided over Constantinople for most of this time was Andronikos II (1282–1328): what was his role in all this activity? It is perhaps not too unkind to say that it was to be the recipient of advice from his court rhetoricians and pleas from indigent would-be court rhetoricians. In fact, the situation is parallel to that of the twelfth century with young hopefuls touting their wares in literary salons to as many potential patrons as possible. There is a further parallel since it is arguable that the driving force for the over-production of trained potential bureaucrats lay in the educational activities of Theodore I Laskaris in Nicaea when he set Nikephoros Blemmydes to create an academy.⁵⁹ But the bottom line is that the emperor had no more resources to be an effective patron than had his aristocratic subjects – such as Metochites; in fact he probably had less. It is very hard to argue that Andronikos II had any impact on the literary developments of his reign.

So in seeking to examine the emperor as a literary patron in Byzantium have I put up a straw man, or rather a straw argument? Not entirely. Patronage is undeniably an important element in the production and development of literature in Byzantium and given the position held by the emperor one should expect to see his attitudes and tastes feeding through into this area. It is a question that needs to be faced. My rather unsurprising conclusion would be that some emperors, given circumstances, reign lengths and personalities, had more impact than others but that patrons of whatever social rank never ceased to be significant.

Should this rather jejune conclusion have any bearing on contemporary approaches to Byzantine literature? I would suggest that the texts that have been mentioned in this essay as offered to emperors and other patrons as part of a patron-client deal and the texts that were unequivocally sponsored by emperors as patrons have ranged from heavy theology, through diplomatic text-book, advice to emperors, saucy satire, lurid romance to sombre history. They have also been expressed in every register of Greek from the most labyrinthine prose to contorted hexameter to jog-trot fifteen-syllable verse. When considering texts produced in Byzantium we certainly need to forget the taxonomies imposed so efficiently by Krumbacher and the German philology of the late nineteenth century and perpetuated by the handbooks of Beck and Hunger, and revert to an earlier phase of Germanic scholarship with the broad sweep of Fabricius, the revised versions of whose *Bibliotheca Graeca* are still worth checking today. In other words, one should examine sympathetically the entire output of a given period, regardless of genre and register: Jan Olof Rosenqvist has set a useful example.⁶⁰

This essay has the rather cheap title Purple Prose: much of what was produced in praise of Byzantine emperors in ceremonial contexts could indeed come under that heading, apart from the fact that in the later years of Byzantium even more of it was Purple Verse.

⁵⁸ In addition to Fryde, *Early Palaeologan Renaissance*, see I. Sevcenko, “The Palaeologan renaissance”, in W.T. Treadgold, *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Stanford 1984), 144–171.

⁵⁹ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 292–296; C. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries, 1204–ca.1310* (Nicosia 1982); S. Mergiali, *L’enseignement et les lettrés pendant l’époque des paléologues (1261–1453)* (Athens 1996).

⁶⁰ In his admirably succinct *Die byzantinische Literatur* (Berlin 2007).

Michael Jeffreys

Versified Press-releases on the Role of the Komnenian Emperor: The Public Poems of Manganeios Prodromos

Elizabeth and I have been editing Manganeios Prodromos since far back in the twentieth century. We have presented individual poems and groups of poems as contributions to at least two previous AABS conferences. The text of Manganeios is very long, containing around the same number of lines as the *Iliad*. Although it is split into 148 distinct poems in two metres and several different genres, they need to be approached as a whole, for there are several common dimensions, especially the ideological framework to be studied in this paper. But most of Manganeios' work is found in one accurate manuscript, so many aspects of the edition are not taxing. Manganeios is a historical source for the mid-twelfth century, but the information he provides is rather vague and not extensive: it is often possible to date individual poems and place them within the historical record, but what is added to that record as a result is not, in conventional terms, very much. Thus the present article has elements of an apologia, by analysing the most prominent of the genres I mentioned and its value to the historian. I will also discuss the purposes of the edition and suggest ways in which it is likely to be used, ending with some unusual features we are building into it. For a conference on imperium, I shall choose as examples elements of Manganeios' work referring to Komnenian ideas about the emperor. There is insufficient space here to treat imperial ideology as a whole, but I shall examine some related concepts which I hope will be interesting.

I have called the genre in question the "versified press-release", and the label needs justification. The key figure in the history of the genre is Theodore Prodromos, the prolific predecessor of Manganeios who is responsible for the second element of the latter's artificial name.¹ Manganeios Prodromos is an anonymous poet, an imitator of Theodore Prodromos, who was christened Manganeios because he wrote a number of poems trying to gain a privileged position in the Mangana monastery.² Attempts have been made to merge the two Prodromoi into one authorial personality, but these are doomed to failure, since there are differences both in persona and in biography.³ At poem 37, lines 27–48, for example, Manganeios refers to Theodore as a dead colleague. So far as the key genre is concerned, before Theodore there seem to have been court poems to mark the births, marriages and deaths of the imperial family and didactic poems for young princes, all written in a simple level of formal Greek and in the fifteen-syllable verse.⁴ Some were probably for public performance in the context of the court. It was probably Theodore who expanded the subjects of the poems to include encomia for ceremonies of triumph and even

¹ The texts are edited in Theodoros Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner, Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 11 (Vienna, 1974) (henceforward, Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte*).

² These poems are published in Theodoros Prodromos, *De Manganis*, ed. Silvius Bernardinello, Università di Padova, Studi bizantini e neogreci 4 (Padova, 1972).

³ A. Kazhdan and S. Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, (Berkeley, 1985), 87–93; R. Beaton, "The Rhetoric of Poverty: the Lives and Opinions of Theodore Prodromos", *BMGS* 11 (1987), 12–25; their arguments are rebutted by P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 440–441 (henceforward Magdalino, *Empire*). Magdalino in the same book gives a list of the titles of Manganeios' poems: see pp. 494–500.

⁴ M. Jeffreys, "The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse", *DOP* 28 (1974), 164–170.

bulletins from the imperial army without an explicit triumphal element, inspired by the emperor's administrators or written to gain their favour and support. The language was such that, in combination with the popular rhythms of the fifteen-syllable verse, it would have been more or less intelligible to the half-educated, even in oral form. This was a way of making communication with a broader audience than that which would have read learned prose, and of presenting important news within a narrative and ideological framework which could be controlled to a large degree by the imperial authorities, the spin-doctors of their day. The evidence for the genre comprises a number of Theodore's poems dealing with John II's wars against the Turks and his expedition to Antioch, dated between the middle 1130s to the beginning of the following decade. Not all these texts were simple: some used learned hexameters, some of the longest and best examples of the form written for centuries. Others employed learned frameworks like a succession of stanzas put into the mouths of all the Old Testament prophets.⁵

The picture of the emperor appearing from Theodore's work is not particularly new. Most of the traditional virtues of the Byzantine ruler were celebrated, together with the new militarism of the Komnenoi.⁶ The latter trait is emphasised to an extent which would have seemed wrong to most previous Byzantine generations, even that of the terrible Basil II the Bulgar-slayer. Basil was praised in quite conventional ways in his own time, and it was not until the Komnenian period that he acquired his fearsome reputation.⁷ Prodromos included much conventional imagery of the emperor as a brilliant sun, warming his subjects and burning his foes. There is a lot of the vocabulary and symbolism of the chariot races, with the emperor sharing the honour of all the victorious drivers. Several poems are linked with the demes (the old quarrelsome chariot-racing clubs, which now reappear in a sanitised form). One poem celebrates the four colours of the Hippodrome, which, I think, would have struck the audience as nearly as archaic as hexameters. As personalised praise for John, the most significant details (and useful for our purposes) are two: first the stress on John's birth in the *porphyra*, as the first *porphyrogennetos* emperor for many decades, together with admiration for the dynasty and its wide imperial family. Second, John is personified as a lion, with obvious military connotations, and linked with the lion of Boukoleon, a prominent statue in the imperial palace.

It was the popular narrative poems which were to have greatest currency in the next generation, especially with Manganeios. Some of the mechanisms involved become plain in a more personal poem in a similar style written by Theodore Prodromos to Theodore Stypeiotes, who was later to become a powerful *epi tou kanikleiou*.⁸ Stypeiotes, according to Prodromos, when he was one of his students, was a great enthusiast for his teacher's long narrative poems. But now that he had finished his education and was travelling round on imperial campaigns, he had not taken the next logical step of sending his old teacher information for him to versify and issue in narrative form. In addition, when the emperor and his courtiers were absent on long campaigns (like those of 1137–1139 to Antioch or 1140–1141 to Pontos), there was nobody present to sponsor Theodore's poetry, and he starved. The implication is that Theodore had created a paid role for himself as a propagandist for imperial military success, but had then discovered that the role was not a

⁵ All are published by Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte*: IV, V, XI, XV, XVI, XVIII and XIX are simple texts in the dekapentasyllavos; hexameters are used in III, VI and VIII; the prophets speak in XVII.

⁶ For the subjects in this paragraph, see Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte*, 79–109.

⁷ This is the main thesis of P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* (Cambridge 2003).

⁸ Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte*, LXXI. On the person, see O. Kresten, "Zum Sturz des Theodoros Stypeiotes", *JÖB* 27 (1978), 49–103.

regular one, since absences on campaign could be long and information scarce. This poem is one of the most insistent of his so-called begging poems.

The process in the eleventh century had been rather different. Psellos wrote a letter to Eustratios Choirosphaktes, who held important positions in the hierarchy of Romanos IV, congratulating the emperor and his army on brilliant achievements in the campaign of 1068, but also complaining that the success had not been properly advertised.⁹ In the next year, Psellos himself saw acts of heroism from Romanos while on campaign with him; but he was then forced to return home because he was not fit enough to keep up with the army.¹⁰ Back in the capital, he found that nobody knew of the emperor's exploits, and so reported them himself to the Senate, to the empress Eudokia, and even to Romanos and Eudokia's infant son, who gurgled appropriately.¹¹ Psellos seems to have expected prose reports to be sent back from the campaign by an official like Choirosphaktes, perhaps a foreshadowing of the twelfth-century form we are examining.

The next step in popularising the genre was taken by Manuel I Komnenos, John II's successor. Manuel was the youngest of four sons, and for him to inherit the throne the two eldest had to be struck down with mortal illness almost simultaneously, just before the death of their father while hunting, a sequence of events which has given rise to conspiracy theories.¹² The third son was kept out of the way at the key moment, allowing a complete reversal of the expected order of succession. Manuel became emperor before he was twenty-five. His reign thus started with a number of question marks, which it was the duty of the imperial rhetoricians and their managers, his spin-doctors, to remove. Theodore Prodromos was still alive, and he was pressed into service for the first few years.¹³ But the majority of such surviving poems addressed to Manuel were written by Manganeios.

Narrative poems by Manganeios in this genre date from Manuel I's first attack on Konya in 1145–1146 through to his descent on Cilicia and Antioch in 1159. They all seem to have been written immediately after the last event they cover, but even so, it is possible to make suggestions about their sources. There is considerable similarity in the subjects covered and the choice of narrative detail between Manganeios' work and the encomiastic *Epitome* of John Kinnamos.¹⁴ Particularly in the early years of the reign, one almost has the impression that Manganeios is the source for Kinnamos; however, because of differences of approach, it would be safer to assume that they were using the same reports, presumably in prose, from the imperial army. These are the press releases of my title. Manganeios would have seized them for his verse as soon as they were issued. Kinnamos was writing as an imperial secretary decades later, probably consulting an official dossier of reports.

If we compare Kinnamos' text with Manganeios' early poems, we may make a preliminary estimate of Manganeios' creative role, beyond mere versification. Kinnamos provides a generally linear and unvarnished narrative, focalised nearly always on the emperor, with many elements of encomium. Manganeios complicates the narrative structure enormously, often introducing a wide range of different narratorial voices and providing visual depictions of events, some claiming to be direct and some metaphorical – in fact, it is hard to distinguish between them. At the same time he uses all the resources of

⁹ P. Gautier, "Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées", *REB* 44 (1986), no. 25, lines 50–65.

¹⁰ K.N. Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi* vol. 5 (Venice, 1876), no. 176, pp. 451–455.

¹¹ *Ibid.* vol 5, no. 3, pp. 224–227.

¹² The events are narrated by Magdalino, *Empire*, 195, while the conspiracy theory had been set out by R. Browning, "The Death of John II Comnenus", *Byzantion* 31 (1960), 229–235.

¹³ Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte*, XXX–XXXIII.

¹⁴ This relationship is studied by Magdalino, *Empire*, 442–453.

the rhetorical handbooks on encomium, unashamedly straying close to the line which separates encomia of the emperor from those of the divinity. He employs vocabulary and images for ideological purposes and constantly repeats them, sometimes within a single poem, more regularly from one poem to others. This repetition is very striking. It is tempting to assume that the poet had little concept of the textual unity of the manuscript collection of his works, and did not intend them to be read together. There is some sign that he demanded *variatio* rather than repetition within the single poem, produced orally or in writing on one occasion. However there is no indication that he felt constrained to avoid repetition between poems. The impression left is of ideological messages rammed home by remorseless repetition. These two characteristics of Manganeios' poetry, narratological fragmentation and repetition of words and phrases of ideological importance, will form the central subjects of this paper.

Let us look briefly at poem 25, probably the earliest in the collection, written to congratulate the emperor on his first expedition against the Seljuks of Konya, dated to 1146, the third year of his reign.¹⁵ It is divided into stanzas – usually regarded as a sign of public performance. Manganeios begins, probably programmatically, with references to imperial compassion and humanity, traditional attributes at variance with the military picture which follows. But most of the poem consists of comparisons, each lasting from three to six lines: with David, Herakles, Achilles, David again, John II, Christ, the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, a mysterious Diogenes (probably a learned variant of the epic hero Digenis Akritis rather than the victim of Manzikert, Romanos IV Diogenes), Joshua, Alexander the Great, St Stephen the protomartyr, Herakles again, Alexander again, Leonidas (the “Theban” who fought so well at Thermopylae), Alexander a third time, Bellerophon, Philip of Macedon, and finally Jacob. In most cases, Manuel comes out best in the comparison, but not with Christ or John II, who represent ideals which Manuel nearly attains. Most of the comparisons add a little to the narrative of the campaign. Note Leonidas “the Theban”, an error that Theodore Prodromos would never have committed. Alexander and Philip, of course, were specially relevant to a campaign against the Persians, and the Turks are always called Persians by Manganeios, as by others of his generation. There were no Turks in the ancient models the Byzantines had to follow.

Despite the compassion of the beginning, militarism soon takes over: the imperial sword is described as thirsting for blood, and the poet wished he could have kissed Manuel's bloody heel, wounded by a “Persian” arrow. The imperial footwear is sanctified and shown to be really imperial by the red stain which soaks into it. The scene reappears with some similarity of wording in Kinnamos. Manuel indulges in a good deal of personal violence in the poem, as at the equivalent point of Kinnamos' work. One must assume that the emperor and his propagandists felt a need to show that the recently-crowned young prince was tough enough for the job. In fact the whole campaign reads in the poem and the account of the historian in the same way, Kinnamos making it an attempt to impress his new western wife, who needed to be shown that her husband could cut the mustard as a knight on the battlefield.¹⁶

From the list of names I mentioned as comparators, we may enlarge the focus to examine all the proper names in Manganeios' poems, to assess the conceptual world in which he operated. One can see five chronological and cultural layers:

¹⁵ Extracts from this poem were published by E. Miller, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades* II, pp. 759–761. However all the poem numbers and line references to Manganeios given in this paper are taken from the edition we are preparing.

¹⁶ Ioannes Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn, 1836), 47.

(1) The contemporary world, with references to the emperor, his family, and geographical names from his campaigns: these are surprisingly few, considering that the poems were written for military occasions and Komnenian family events.

(2) The imperial past, Byzantine and Roman imperial history, going back to Alexander but rarely including the Roman Republic.

(3) The New Testament world, infrequently mentioned, often in wordplay on Manuel's name, only one syllable short of Emmanuel.

Then there are two pre-Roman worlds using the word *basileus*, which provides continuity of sovereign titles across periods which are divided by the words "emperor" and "king" in modern languages. Agamemnon, Alexander the Great and Manuel Komnenos all have the same title in Byzantine Greek.

(4) The Ancient Greek world of the *basileus*, largely from the Homeric poems and mythology, but also including what for us are historical early Athenian kings. There is little sympathy with the later city-states which were the source of Byzantium's written Greek language and much of its culture.

(5) In many ways the most significant layer is from the Old Testament, many of whose kings and patriarchs appear in the poems, demanding from the readers more detailed knowledge of identities and biographies than in other layers. This makes it ironic, as we have observed elsewhere, that the standard accusation used against Westerners when Manganeios discriminates against them is their adoption of Jewish customs, especially over the azymes.¹⁷ The new Jerusalem of Manganeios' thought-world finds it easy to protest against attitudes and practices influenced by the old Jerusalem. Manganeios' closest professional identification is with David the psalmist, just as Manuel's is with David the King. The words of the Psalms will dominate any index of Manganeios' quotations. The Old Testament is specially quarried for younger sons who surpassed their elders, as models for Manuel.

Manganeios is not a straightforward and linear narrator, but a kind of showman. His text resembles a radio broadcast of a circus, or perhaps the opening ceremony of a World Cup. The broadcast has to inform the listeners, but it also seems to run the show, as the performers are told when to come on, what to do on stage, and what witness to bear about events elsewhere. Usually there are only one or two persons in action at a time, but they may undergo constant historical comparisons, like Manuel on his return from Konya as described above. These may be imagined as visual mutations. Usually the scene is Constantinople, but several poems describe events from around the Empire. Some of these are problematic: there is a repeated picture of desperate suppliants approaching Manuel with ropes around their necks, acknowledging guilt and asking him to choose between life and death for them. Similar scenes, only a little less graphic, appear in Kinnamos.¹⁸ Is this motif the invention of a real master of imperial ceremonies on the spot, of the imperial press-release, or of the literary imagination of Manganeios? Similarities between the two texts are too close to think of coincidence. Sometimes the characters described were probably present in Constantinople, like emperor, bride and groom at a wedding in the imperial family. Sometimes they could not possibly have been there. If present in some public space, did they take any notice of the text being read, or merely stand impassively in

¹⁷ See Elizabeth Jeffreys and Michael Jeffreys, "The 'Wild Beast from the West': Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade", in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington D.C. 2001), 110–112.

¹⁸ The closest parallels concern Stefan Nemanja (Desa) (Kinnamos 112.18–113.7 with Manganeios 7.271–353), and Renaud de Chatillon (Kinnamos 182.11–183.13 with Manganeios 9.93–148).

their bejewelled costumes, staring forward? Some byplay is described between the teenage brides and grooms: the girls are fainting, the boys must step in to hold them up. Did this have any visual reflection in the ceremony? It is difficult to imagine that the groups of dancing mythological females, nymphs and Hours and Muses and Graces, who perform for the handsome young Manuel half a dozen times in the corpus, had a real basis in the ceremonies: but they are called on to the stage just like the others. The whole is said to go on amid a spectacular light-show, half *son et lumière* and half disco. There is accompaniment mentioned from every musical instrument known to the ancient and medieval Greek worlds. But what lights, if any, did participants in the ceremony see, and what music did they hear? Many of the poems form a net of words, which can rarely be used to catch anything solid.

To these words we must now turn. To give a sense of the restricted vocabulary, often repeated as I have described it, I shall include tables listing the words used in particular patterns, including frequencies within Manganeios' oeuvre of more than 17,000 lines. The statistics are included for indicative purposes only. I have counted the total number of occurrences of the word in the corpus, and in most cases I have tried to remove examples not relevant to the point under discussion. No greater precision is claimed than this.

The first table refers to words linking people of Manganeios' time to exemplary figures of the past, e.g. "another David", and then returning to the present:

ἄλλος	(67)	another
δεύτερος	(32)	a second
ἕτερος	(18)	another
πάλαι	(27)	in the ancient world
πρίν	(55)	in the past
νῦν	(246)	now, and other functions returning the poem to the narrative present

The points to be made here are the frequency of the pattern concerned and the limited range of words with which it is achieved. The overuse of νῦν, monosyllabic and therefore metrically flexible, emphasises the fact that Manganeios is always delivering the very latest news.

No real lions appear in Manganeios' work. However, the word "lion" is quite frequent in the poems. As mentioned above, Theodore Prodromos had made John II the personification of the lion of Boukoleon in the palace. Manuel begins his reign as that lion's cub, and gradually takes on his own warlike persona as a lion in his own right. Two verbs mark his growing maturity: σκιρτῶ (frolic) is a cub-like activity which is lost as he becomes full-grown, while βοῶ (roar) becomes more frequent and throaty as he finds his adult voice:

λέων	(43)	lion
σκύμνος	(31)	cub
σκιρτῶ	(24)	frolic
βοῶ	(11)	roar

This banal system of images is repeated ad nauseam.

The poems are pervaded by words indicating light, which will lead to a much larger table. In the statistics below I have made no attempt to distinguish metaphorical from literal light, or light appearing in narrative contexts from more general scene-setting. In most cases, such distinctions are impossible to make:

αἴγλη	(30)	glow	λαμπάς	(25)	torch
αἰθρία	(20)	sunshine	λαμπηδών	(14)	lustre
ἄκτις	(91)	ray	λαμπρός	(153)	brilliant
ἀμάρυγμα	(11)	radiance	λαμπρότης	(18)	brilliance
ἄστήρ	(67)	star	λαμπρύνω	(25)	make brilliant
ἀστράπτω	(18)	blaze	μαρμαρυγή	(34)	gleam
αὐγή	(23)	dawn	πῦρ	(97)	fire
βολίς	(22)	lightning	σελάγημα	(13)	flashing
ἐκλάμπω	(18)	shine	σέλας	(60)	flash
ἐκπέμπω	(10)	emit	τηλαυγής	(21)	shining at a distance
ἔλλαμνις	(12)	illumination	φαιδρός	(29)	bright
ἥλιος	(94)	sun	φαιδρύνω	(16)	brighten
κατακτινοβολῶ	(12)	light brightly	φῶς	(92)	light
καταλάμπω	(28)	shine brilliantly	φωστήρ	(41)	heavenly body
καταστράπτω	(10)	blaze brightly	φωσφόρος	(31)	light-source
κεραυνός	(12)	thunderbolt	φωτάρχης	(26)	lord of light

Light implies darkness, and an impressive, though shorter list may be drawn up of words involving night, gloom and storm. It is interesting that the great majority of these are used of military, political and psychological trouble rather than physical absence of light or bad weather. Metaphor is much more frequent than meteorology.

ἀχλύς	(18)	gloom	νεφέλη	(19)	cloud
γνόφος	(28)	obscurity	νέφος	(59)	misty cloud
ζάλη	(19)	storm	νιφετός	(17)	snowstorm
ζόφος	(18)	blackness	νύξ	(38)	night
θύελλα	(8)	windstorm	πρηστήρ	(15)	hurricane
καταιγίς	(26)	thunderstorm	σάλος	(12)	heavy swell
κλύδων	(48)	rough water	σκότος	(27)	darkness
λαῖλαψ	(25)	whirlwind	τρικυμία	(10)	tempest

As a result of these frequent usages readers of Manganeios get used to scenes of brilliant light interrupted by contrasting darkness, much of both clearly metaphorical in effect. The constant emphasis on illumination or the lack of it blunts the senses and makes it difficult to determine what light, if any, might be used as a physical part of the ceremony.

There is an important question to be asked in this connection, which I tried to answer in an article in *Parergon* some years ago.¹⁹ Manuel during his reign was gradually abandoning the expensive and uncomfortable Great Palace in favour of Blachernai, though he would return to the old palace when important visitors needed to be impressed. Equally, at some time between the beginning of the twelfth century and the recovery of Constantinople, the main basis of imperial ceremonial changed from chariot-racing in the hippodrome to the *prokypsis*, the appearance of the emperor alone or with the imperial family on a high scaffolding, accompanied by all the light the technology of the time could muster.²⁰ The

¹⁹ "The Comnenian Prokypsis", *Parergon* ns 5 (1987), 38–53, where there are references to earlier bibliography.

²⁰ The full ceremony is described in Pseudo-Codinus, *Traité des Offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris 1976), 195–198. A similar wooden tower was built by John VI Kantakouzenos at Selymbria when marrying

dominance of light in Manganeios' work is matched by an almost complete absence of chariot-racing. Was he perhaps writing for ceremonies based on the *prokypsis*? The change is very hard to date: there had always been light in the hippodrome to accentuate the moment of the emperor's appearance before his subjects. The existence of the new ceremony may only be guaranteed by the use of the noun *prokypsis*. This unfortunately was a neologism likely to be unacceptable in twelfth-century writing. The first surviving use of *prokypsis* is dated to Nicaea in the 1250s.

The solution I proposed started from three technical terms found in the later poems containing the first uses of *πρόκυψις*: *γίγας*, giant, a standing metaphor referring to the sun and to the giant emperor, the sun on earth; *σκηνή*, a high platform; and *δίσκος*, plainly a circular part of the light-technology. I proposed that we should look for the verb *προκύπτω* (I appear), always much more acceptable linguistically than the noun, combined with one or more of the technical terms, in a ceremony which did not seem to be in the hippodrome. There are three good examples in Manganeios of the conjunction of these elements, together with a statement attached to one of them that Manuel was the innovator of the associated ceremony. The terms are used much more widely in interesting contexts:

<i>γίγας</i>	(72)	giant	
<i>δίσκος</i>	(27)	disc	
<i>προκύπτω</i>	(17)	appear	
<i>πρόκυψις</i>	(0)	<i>prokypsis</i> (an unacceptable neologism)	
<i>σκηνή</i>	(9)	platform	
<i>ὕψηλός</i>	(21)	high (of the emperor making an appearance)	

There several other passages which may be describing the *prokypsis* without using the technical terms. I think that a good case can be made that this fundamental change in ceremony was made by Manuel around the time of the passage of the Second Crusade in 1147. But this is not the time to list the supporting evidence.

Although Manganeios' poems are urban in character, they are full of rural imagery, introduced without comment as if visible near his oral stage. The most prominent element is a vine. It is repeatedly mentioned with all its different parts: the root, trunk, branches, high-rising tendrils, twigs, buds, fruit, bunches, individual grapes, and even one or two stages in the production of wine.

<i>ἄμπελος</i>	(34)	vine	<i>καρπός</i>	(42)	fruit
<i>ἀναδενδράς</i>	(17)	high tendril	<i>κλάδος</i>	(66)	branch
<i>βλάστημα</i>	(10)	flowering	<i>κλήμα</i>	(13)	twig
<i>βλαστός</i>	(27)	shoot	<i>κληματίς</i>	(14)	stem
<i>βότρυς</i>	(97)	(bunch of) grapes	<i>πρέμνος</i>	(7)	trunk
<i>γλεῦκος</i>	(12)	must	<i>ρίζα</i>	(26)	root
<i>δένδρον</i>	(42)	tree	<i>σταφυλή</i>	(13)	grape
<i>ἐξανθῶ</i>	(15)	bloom	<i>φυτόν</i>	(34)	plant

The parts of the vine have human referents, the members of the Komnenian imperial family, arranged on the plant according to age and rank. Boughs outrank twigs, buds are junior to fruit. Babies are buds and bloom, spouses are grafted on, teenage tendrils reach up to the sky, branches finally fall off. The equation of the vine and the family is sometimes

his daughter to the Ottoman sultan Orkhan; see *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri iv*, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn, 1838–42), II, 587–588.

explicit, sometimes it is assumed. Occasionally another great family is allowed a vine, but a smaller one. After all, the previous generations of the Komnenians were very prolific: Alexios I, his brother Isaac and his son John II all had seven or eight children who reached maturity. The way in which the operation of the vine was part of the accepted mechanisms of Manganeios' poetry can be seen in poem 50, where in line 2 the vine is said to have a womb, from which new life has sprung. This assumes two simultaneous metaphorical transitions, from the vine to the family, then from the family to its female members.

The final table of words could be called stage directions – words expressing encouragement, asking for a response, marking an emotional reaction, indicating an interrogative tone, directing attention and so on. All of them need to be translated within the individual contexts where they are used, though I have attempted general translations for some of them.

ἄγε	(21)	come on!	λέγε/εἰπέ	(72)	say!
ἄρα	(50)		λοιπόν	(131)	
βαβαί	(43)		ναί	(77)	yes!
δεῦτε	(14)	come here!	φέρε	(15)	come on!
ὄρω	(140)	see (various uses)	χαῖρε/χαίροις	(51)	
ἰδοῦ	(37)	look!			

In this last table, we see some of the formulae which link Manganeios' voice, that of the commentator, with his audience and the characters who appear on his oral stage. They are all words towards the bottom of the register of Greek which could be used in writing, sometimes words which happen to coincide in ancient and twelfth-century spoken Greek, so that it was possible for the poet to sound as if he was using plain everyday language while breaking none of the taboos of educated writing. The emphasis is on immediacy of communication and on the imperative mood, instructing his cast of characters in the satisfactory performance of their roles and telling his assumed audience to pay attention to their part in the show provided for them.

Let us think of the edition. We believe strongly that editions should not blindly follow a prearranged formula: presentation of the material must be dependent on the nature of the text edited, and on likely users and their needs. How will people read Manganeios? We do not expect many to start at the first page and read through to the last. There would be little point, since we will edit the 148 poems in the order in which they appear in the manuscript. This is far from systematic, though not completely random: there are several clusters of poems arranged by thematic criteria, while others are linked chronologically. There is also a tendency for the fifteen-syllable poems to come before the twelve-syllable, though there are many exceptions. The gatherings of the manuscript are themselves disturbed, and it has not proved possible to establish the order in which they originally stood. To improve on the manuscript order, we should have to impose either thematic or chronological arrangement. Both would be likely to obscure the clustering already present in the manuscript, while introducing many extra arbitrary editorial judgements to the edition. Many poems, for example, have no historical content, and less than half of them may be dated, even approximately, with any confidence.

People will come to the edition with particular needs: historians of Hungary and Serbia, of Byzantine-Turkish wars, the Second Crusade, the principality of Antioch, Byzantine ceremonial and the Komnenian family; art-historians, and those interested in the position of the female aristocrat, especially the *sevastokratorissa* Eirene, the most fascinating female

non-empress in Byzantium, whose career, we expect, will arouse great interest.²¹ They will read the poems which address those needs, and not the others. It is pointless to expect readers of poem 108 to remember commentary from poem 20, because they are most unlikely to have read it. Each poem must be self-explanatory, if not self-contained. And a long introduction may not help. I came across the other day my review of Wolfram Hörandner's edition of Theodore Prodromos' *Historische Gedichte*.²² Its main judgement is positive, but includes a complaint that I could find nothing in the 150 pages of insightful analysis in his introduction without rereading it all. Thirty-five years of using the book have destroyed our copy but not made it much easier to find things in the introduction. Manganeios, longer, more diverse and more repetitive in his references than Theodore, will be harder still to introduce in a way which will satisfy his readers without providing annotation at all the points in the text on which comment is required.

What annotation will be needed, for example, when Manganeios speaks of the Graces dancing for Manuel to celebrate some success of his army? The translation we shall provide is not enough. It will be necessary to give external references, to indicate who the Graces are and what is the occasion for their rejoicing. But in this repetitious text, where the Graces make several dancing appearances, another essential part of the comment will be internal, to gather the evidence from these passages and summarise the way in which the poet uses the Graces. Can one see, for example, by comparing these lines, whether they refer to a female presence in the ceremony, or are they just another metaphor? The same goes for lion cubs, vine twigs, giant suns and many other issues discussed here and many dozens of others not so far mentioned. The details of specific elements of the light-show, the place of different virtues within the imperial ideology and the role of hortatory imperatives may also claim space in the annotation, once the relevant passages have been collected.

Each of these comments will need to be several lines in length, and can be given only once, even if the Graces dance several times. Where should they be placed? They could be attached to the first occurrence of the phenomenon discussed, the Graces' first performance, with later references back to that point. But this would overburden the early poems with annotation and leave later texts with bare cross-references. We have decided to place such notes in an index at the back of the edition and restrict the annotation in the text to an indication that a relevant note exists.

Manganeios uses many repeated names, phrases and concepts which will need explanation for most users of the edition. Even experienced readers of Byzantine texts, who know who the Graces are, will benefit from a few lines on the way in which this poet uses them, since we do not expect every reader to study the whole corpus. Without such explanation, the average reader will often have a restricted idea of what the poet is saying. Most of these issues have a rhetorical effect: they may add to the text in an economical way some historical depth, some mythological charm or some religious authority. They may refer to a part of military ideology which makes little sense unless one knows the articulation of the whole: is a reference to the boldness of a general an encomium of his valour or a criticism of his overconfidence? Sometimes a word becomes shorthand for an event. "The kings" is often used in lists of the trials faced by Manuel I to indicate the Second Crusade. In all such cases a word or two in the text opens up a wider dimension of meaning by one of many rhetorical strategies. The editors of Manganeios feel a need to provide information on two levels. The first, for less experienced readers, is a simple

²¹ As a foretaste, see E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys, "Who was the Sevastokratorissa Eirene?" *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 40–68.

²² *BZ* 70 (1977), 105–107.

warning that rhetoric is in operation in a particular line and a wider meaning should be sought, with an indication of the words the poet has put in the text to trigger a rhetorical reaction. The second is an estimate of the results to be gained by the rhetorical “expansion” of those triggers.

To the *apparatus criticus* and the *apparatus fontium* at the foot of each page of text, we propose to add an *apparatus rhetoricus*. I shall give two examples of lines needing several elements of annotation each to explain what I mean.

55.53: Ἴδου γὰρ πάλιν εἶδομεν τοῦ δίσκου τὴν ἀκτῖνα
For look, we have again seen the ray of your disc
53: ἰδοῦ, πάλιν, δίσκος, ἀκτίς

69.143: Λαμπροῖς τροπαίων φαιδρύνουσα μαργάροις
(She) lighting him up with brilliant pearls of triumphs
143: λαμπρός, τρόπαιον, φαιδρύνω, μάργαρος

In the first case, *ἰδοῦ* “look!” is a regular stage-direction used to draw the audience’s attention, *πάλιν* “again” is regularly (sometimes gratuitously) added to items of ceremonial to express their remorseless repetition, and you have already heard about the ray from the disc. In the second, the Theotokos has become an agent in the light-show, and is lighting up the emperor by adding brilliant pearls, representing his victories, to his jewelled costume. Experienced Byzantine readers will grasp most of this, but not all, unless they read the whole corpus; the inexperienced may need this level of help to make any sense at all of some poems. For each of the above lines readers will be referred to four brief discussions at the back of the edition, which should provide the assistance needed. Note that we have decided to use lemmata in Greek characters to make the reference. Knowledge of Greek script and its alphabetisation, we feel, is quite widespread, and the provision of lemmata will help in further consultation of lexica and other aids.

Once the *apparatus rhetoricus* is in place, one may think of other issues that may be added to it, other cases where the translation cannot provide all the information required to understand the text. The two situations we are considering are the following:

(a) lines where the choice of words and syntax is controlled more by form than by sense, as in the triple repetition with *homoioleuton* in 2.231:

ὦ τῆς καινῆς, ὦ τῆς φορικτῆς, ὦ τῆς καθόλου νίκης
O your novel, terrible and total victory!

(b) lines which make their point by word play, like the pun on a sculptor's name in 1.189–90:

Αὐτὸς καὶ πράττεις ἄριστα καὶ τελειοῖς τὰς πράξεις,
αὐτὸς αὐτὸν εἰκόνιζε καὶ γίνου Πραξιτέλης.
You yourself act wonderfully and perfect those actions;
make an image of yourself and become Praxiteles.

In both of these cases imagination will be needed to make the point effectively but briefly, addressing those who will not know technical terms like *homoioleuton*.

To sum up: Manuel I, when he acceded to the throne, was a young and unexpected heir, needing the full help of his rhetorical spin-doctors, who were armed with a genre of poetry recently brought to the fore by Theodore Prodromos. One of them was Theodore’s younger

colleague Manganeios. They enmeshed Manuel in a range of historical and mythical personae and images which connected him with all that was holy, powerful and admired in Byzantine civilization. The fact that he was a younger son in his twenties only put him in an Old Testament tradition, and made him an attractive subject for romantic comment and the attentions of mythological dancing girls. Some ideas are repeated from poem to poem in similar words with mind-bending regularity to ram home ideological messages. This must have made some of the text reasonably intelligible when it was produced before a popular audience, despite the problems of the fairly learned language. Similar historical details appear in the historians of Manuel's reign, especially Kinnamos, with some of the same means of expression – hence the idea floated in the title of the paper that they derived from a series of press-releases. Manuel and his minders will have given his encomiasts the news to be transmitted, the line to be taken, and to judge by the close parallels in Kinnamos, some ideas about key words to employ. The encomiasts would then have competed to produce effective works, good enough to be chosen for presentation on formal occasions, able to explain imperial policies and successes in a clear and memorable way. This paper, and the edition it foreshadows, are trying to continue their work.

**Essays on *Imperium* and Culture in Honour of
E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys**

Amelia R. Brown

Archbishops, Generals and Governors between East and West in Early Byzantine Greece

In the fourth and fifth centuries, Greece played a crucial yet under-appreciated role in the development of Early Byzantine *imperium*. After Diocletian's reforms and the growth of Constantinople as an imperial capital, the Greek peninsula was the first site of active conflict between emperors, high officials, and archbishops of Old and New Rome. Outsider opportunists like Alaric the Goth were quick to create and exploit controversies between the imperial authorities. Simple geography put Greece at the crux of some struggles, but in the long term, it was the actions of archbishops, generals and governors there which eliminated traditional religion, transformed cities into church-filled citadels, and definitively separated the Roman Empire into Byzantine East and Barbarian West.

While Julian famously enlisted the support of the Greek cities in letters as he moved east, but was saved from battle by Constantius' sudden death, Valentinian managed a peaceful sharing of power with his younger brother Valens as Emperor in the East. However when the emperor Theodosius the Great died in January of 395, he divided his single Roman Empire between his two young sons. The stage was then set for a struggle in Greece between three of his ambitious and adult officials, arguably the beginning of an independent Byzantine Empire with separate *imperium* based in the East. In Milan, the half-Vandal general Stilicho had the largest army, and undisputed regency for the new western child-emperor Honorius.¹ In Constantinople, Praetorian Prefect of the East Rufinus had the new eastern teen-emperor Arcadius under his authority, and an army of unhappy Goths just outside the city walls too.²

For the third ambitious official was Alaric, a Goth with Roman rank owing to aid provided to Theodosius in 394, who commanded a federate army at least partly on a tribal basis.³ With his commander Theodosius dead, Alaric brought his army to Constantinople in 395 and found Rufinus in charge, then went west and south into Greece. In the absence of direct testimony from either Alaric or Rufinus, their encounter at Constantinople and Alaric's intentions afterwards remain unclear; perhaps he received a title like *magister*

¹ For Stilicho, see *PLRE* I, s.v. Stilicho.

² For Rufinus, see, *PLRE* I, 778–781, s.v. Rufinus.

³ For Alaric, see *PLRE* II, 13–18, s.v. Alaricus 1; *ODB*, s.v. Alaric. Alaric seems to first appear in history in Macedonia in 391, when Theodosius suppressed some rebellious barbarians, probably Goths: Zosimus, *HN* 4.48–49 (attack on Theodosius with no leader named); Claudian, *de bello Get.* 524, *de IV cons. Hon.* 107–108 (Alaric the leader of an attack on Theodosius). For the Battle of the Frigidus in 394, and Alaric's Roman rank, probably *comes*, under Theodosius: Socrates, *HE* 5.25, 7.10; Zosimus, *HN* 4.57–58, 5.5.4; Jordanes, *Get.* 145. For Alaric as King of the Goths see: Jordanes, *Get.* 29.146, 32.164, 47.245; H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley 1988), 143–146; A.S. Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths* (Copenhagen 2002), 320–323. For the formation of Gothic 'identity' and Alaric's army see M. Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars: From the Third Century to Alaric* (New York 2007); G. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (Cambridge 2007), 186–219; M. Kulikowski, "Nation vs. Army: A Necessary Contrast?", in A. Gillett (ed), *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2002), 69–84; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, "Alaric's Goths: Nation or Army?", in J. Drinkwater, H. Elton (eds), *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge 1992), 75–83; A. Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford 1970), 156–188.

militum per Illyricum, or perhaps he had no particular authority beyond his own ambition and existing Roman rank when he entered Greece.⁴ His arrival was a surprise to people in Greece according to some sources, but accommodated by imperial officials according to others.

Eunapius of Sardis portrayed the event negatively just a few years later

Alaric with his barbarians invaded Greece by the pass of Thermopylae, as easily as though he were traversing an open stadium or a plain suitable for cavalry. For this gateway of Greece was thrown open to him by the impiety of the men clad in black raiment, who entered Greece unhindered along with him, and by the fact that the laws and restrictions of the hierophantic ordinances had been rescinded.⁵

For Eunapius, Alaric primarily brought the end of traditional Hellenic religion and the destruction of many temples, an era foretold by the hierophant Nestorius, the head priest at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Eleusis near Athens under Julian, Valentinian and Theodosius.⁶ Alaric was aided by ‘men in black’, probably Christian monks on the basis of other references in Eunapius. There may be a connection here with the meeting with Rufinus, for the latter was well-known as a patron of ascetics and holy men, even importing some from Egypt for his estate in Chalcedon.⁷ Alaric and his Goths were Arian Christians, not necessarily militantly anti-pagan like the monks of that era, but certainly likely to disrupt and loot temples, especially if encouraged to do so by authorities in Constantinople eager to follow up legislation with active suppression of polytheism.⁸

For more information on Alaric’s authorization, we must turn to Zosimus, writing about a century after Eunapius and the events of 395.⁹ In his *New History*, based on Eunapius’ lost *Histories*, Alaric not only has monastic accomplices, but also imperial encouragement: Antiochus, the proconsul of Achaia, and Gerontius, the commander of the Thermopylae garrison, were supposedly both bribed by Rufinus to help Alaric. Thus Alaric and his ‘barbarians’ bypass Thebes, but plunder Boeotia, then behold Athena Promachos and Achilles on the Acropolis of Athens and so accept a further payout from the Athenians.¹⁰ The proconsul Antiochus then passes control of Corinth and the cities of the Peloponnese

⁴ Socrates, *HE* 7.10; Zosimus, *HN* 5.5.4; T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington 1994), 165–167.

⁵ Eunapius, *VS* 476, trans. W.C. Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius* (London 1921), 439.

⁶ Eunapius, *VS* 475–6, trans. Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius*, 437.

⁷ J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court CE 364–425* (Oxford 1975), 134–136, 140–142, 179, 228, 233.

⁸ Gothic religion: R.A. Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (New York 1998), 66–77; P.J. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool 1991); E.A. Thompson, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila* (Oxford 1966). For uneven but sometimes state-directed anti-pagan violence across the Eastern Empire in this era: M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley 2005); F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, ca. 370–529* (Leiden 1993).

⁹ For Eunapius’ lost *Histories* and Zosimus’ close use of them, see Photius, *Bibl.* 77, 98; R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus, and Malchus* (Liverpool 1981), 1–28; R.J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds 1990), 9–13.

¹⁰ Zosimus, *HN* 5.5–6; A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora 24: Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700* (Princeton 1988), 49–56. This peaceful encounter is contrary to Claudian, *Ruf.* 2.191, which refers to slaves taken at Athens.

“without toil or struggle” to Alaric.¹¹ However, after Stilicho brought his Western army to Greece to face Alaric in 397, Zosimus claims Stilicho wasted his time with mimes and loose women while his troops plundered Greece. Alaric turned north with his army, but it was Stilicho who was declared a public enemy by the eastern emperor Arcadius and the Senate of Constantinople, for ‘invading’ the East.¹²

Thus, in Greece Alaric was either acting with the permission of the eastern emperor Arcadius, or forced him to pretend that he was, since his presence there became the cause for condemning Stilicho for entering the East with his army. Even after Rufinus was murdered by the army in late 395, no imperial officials of Arcadius ever took any recorded action against Alaric.¹³ When Synesius of Cyrene sent letters from Athens a few years later, he criticized a greedy governor for allowing the city center to decay and for stealing its works of art; this could easily be the same Antiochus blamed for Alaric's access to Greece, and it suggests that at least in Athens it was corrupt imperial officials, rather than raiding barbarians, who were blamed for the state of the city in the fifth century, even if Alaric did do some damage.¹⁴

In the West, however, the poet Claudian composed a very different version of these events. From his arrival at the imperial court in Milan in 395, he wrote, performed and published Latin poems for the young emperor Honorius and his regent Stilicho. For the next nine years Claudian served these western patrons well, crafting several surviving works in honor of Stilicho's military engagements, especially two encounters with Alaric in Greece, in Thessaly in 395 and the Peloponnese in 397. But Claudian's excellence in verse was not in fact accompanied by any lasting military or political achievement by Stilicho for Honorius.

Claudian's invective *Against Rufinus* of 396 presents his patron Stilicho and events in Greece in the best possible light.¹⁵ Thus, Stilicho first went to confront Alaric in Thessaly in the name of *both* young emperors in 395. But Rufinus perfidiously summoned his ‘Eastern’ troops to Constantinople, where they murdered him, and so Stilicho divided his forces and returned to the west. This action freed Alaric to lead his barbarians south into Greece, where otherwise

The cities of the Peloponnese still would have been flourishing untouched by the hand of war, Arcadia and Sparta's citadel would have remained unravaged. Burning Corinth would not have heated the waves of her two seas, nor would cruel chains have led in captivity the matrons of Athens.¹⁶

A different picture from Eunapius and Zosimus! Claudian uniquely accuses Alaric of burning Corinth; Levy noted the parallel with Vergil's *Aeneid* here, and the poetry of Lucan, too.¹⁷ Jerome included this same list of cities in a letter of 396 bemoaning the impact of barbarians, and likely relying on Claudian.¹⁸ In a panegyric of Stilicho, *The Gothic War*,

¹¹ Zosimus, *HN* 5.6.4–5.

¹² Zosimus, *HN* 5.7.1–3; also John of Antioch in *FHG* 4.610a F190; Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius*, 474–477.

¹³ T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington 1994), 165–167.

¹⁴ Synesius, *Epist.* 54, 135.

¹⁵ Claudian, *Ruf.* 1.306–339, 1.349–353, 2.186–196.

¹⁶ Claudian, *Ruf.* 2.187–191, trans. M. Platnauer, *Claudian* (London 1922).

¹⁷ Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.56; Lucan 6.306–311; H.L. Levy, *Claudian's In Rufinum* (Cleveland 1971), 171.

¹⁸ Jerome, *Ep.* 60.16; Levy, *Claudian's In Rufinum*, 171.

Claudian then repeated this story of Alaric in Greece in 395–396 with slightly different classicising toponyms stretching from Thermopylae to Sparta.¹⁹

Yet once Stilicho took the western army to Greece again in 397, Claudian could congratulate the western emperor Honorius as the savior of Greece, who restored the Muses to Mt. Helicon and Apollo to Delphi, “piled funeral pyres high with bones in Arcadia,” and revived Corinth, Sparta and Arcadia with his military might.²⁰ But Claudian’s verse is too broad to fix the site of a single battle between Stilicho and Alaric, if there even was one; the army that Alaric took out of Greece, as Cameron saw, introduces even more doubts about the reality of a confrontation.²¹

Thus, Alaric was blamed in the East for looting with imperial authorization, particularly at the very ancient sites which Stilicho was praised in the West for saving on behalf of Honorius. But besides the damage to cult and peace in Greece, perhaps the most important end result of this episode was the antagonism it provoked between East and West. After his departure from Greece, Alaric moved into Italy and famously sacked Rome, while the East failed to send assistance, and Honorius executed Stilicho despite his repeated victories in the poetry of Claudian.

Honorius himself survived Alaric somehow, while Arcadius died young, but strife between East and West soon again emerged in Greece, this time over church authority. Though Diocletian clearly placed Greece politically under the authority of the Eastern emperor when he divided the Empire, the church there was subject to the Bishop of Rome from the beginning of the Christian hierarchy. Thus, after Perigenes, a Corinthian clergyman, was appointed bishop of Patras but rejected by his new flock there, his legitimate higher authority Pope Boniface approved a new position for him as Archbishop of Corinth.²² In 419, however, the bishops of Achaia, Thessaly and Epirus (subject to the Vicar of Thessaloniki) held a Synod at Corinth to resolve what they called an illegal double-bishopric. The Thessalian bishops called on Perigenes to resign from Corinth, while those of Achaia appealed to Pope Boniface, who confirmed Perigenes as long as Rufus, his Vicar in Thessaloniki, approved.²³ He seems to have done so, and Perigenes remained in office at Corinth. However two years later, the Thessalian bishops apparently saw an opening to appeal to Archbishop Atticus of Constantinople and Arcadius’ son Theodosius II over the head of the Pope. And while Boniface and Atticus exchanged accusatory letters, Theodosius II sent a decree in his own and his uncle Honorius’ name to the relevant high official Philip on July 14, 421.²⁴

This law includes the customary fervent endorsements of the old and traditional, but also a very new and unusual defense of the authority of the Archbishop of Constantinople in Illyricum, as if he were Archbishop of Rome

The same Augusti (Honorius and Theodosius II) to Philippus, Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum. We command that the ancient practice and the pristine ecclesiastical canons which have been in force up to the present shall be

¹⁹ Claudian, *de bello Get.* 186–193, 610–615, 629–634.

²⁰ Claudian, *pr. Ruf.* 2.1–12, *de bello Get.* 511–517, *de IV cons. Hon.* 462–463, 471–473.

²¹ Cameron, *Claudian*, 168–176.

²² F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408–450)* (Berkeley 2006); V. Limberis, “Ecclesiastical Ambiguities: Corinth in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries”, in D.N. Schowalter and S.J. Friesen (eds), *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth* (Cambridge, MA 2005), 443–457).

²³ C. Pietri, *Roma Christiana: Recherches sur l’Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)* (Rome 1976), 2.1106–1108.

²⁴ Letters: Boniface, *Ep.* 13, *PL* 20.770; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.1113.

observed throughout all the provinces of Illyricum and that all innovations shall cease. Then, if any doubt should arise, such cases must be reserved for the synod of priests and their holy court, not without the knowledge of the most revered man of the sacrosanct law, the Bishop of the City of Constantinople, which enjoys the prerogative of ancient Rome. Given on the day before the ides of July in the year of the consulship of Eustathius and Agricola (July 14, 421).²⁵

Meanwhile, back in Italy, Pope Boniface and Honorius were exchanging letters as well, and at last Honorius persuaded both Theodosius II and Atticus in Constantinople to defer to Rome's ecclesiastical authority in Illyricum, and let Perigenes stay on as bishop of Corinth.²⁶ Perigenes then represented Corinth at the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in 431, and died in office in 435.²⁷ This law, however, remained on the books, and the letters of Popes to Greek bishops and to the Emperors in Constantinople in the fifth and sixth centuries are full of more and more angry expressions of authority over Illyricum, authority which was clearly waning as the bishops of its provinces, including Achaia, turned to Constantinople whenever they objected to something.

Thus, these two instances of imperial conflict in Greece both clearly had long-term consequences outside of Greece, specifically the loss of political and later ecclesiastical power for the West. For conditions inside Greece we can only continue to juxtapose the literary sources with one another, and with archaeology, and attempt to restore this area to its proper significance in the development of Byzantine *imperium* over that of Rome.

²⁵ *CTh* 16.2.45 (*CJ* 1.2.6, 11.21.1), tr. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton 1952), 449.

²⁶ Boniface, *Ep.* 10–11, *PL* 20.769–771; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.1118–1119.

²⁷ R. Carpenter, "Researches in the Topography of Ancient Corinth – I", *AJA* 33 (1929), 345–360, 359.

Pauline Allen

**Brushes with the *Imperium*:
Letters of Synesius of Cyrene and Augustine of Hippo on Crisis**

1. Introduction

A great deal has been written over the past few decades on the evolution of episcopal power and influence in late antiquity, and on how bishops identified themselves over against either the *imperium*, or else spheres of ecclesiastical power and influence, such as those at Rome and Constantinople.¹ In this paper, I will be dealing with the correspondence of two men who lived on or close to the Mediterranean shore of the same continent, and whose episcopal careers overlapped at least for some years at the beginning of the fifth century CE.² They were both cultured men who had had distinguished careers before becoming bishops, and they died within fifteen years of each other. There, however, the similarities come to an abrupt halt. One was Greek-speaking, the other Latin-speaking. As far as we know, these two men never met, and, if they had, they probably would not have had much in common to talk about, even if they could have understood each other linguistically or culturally. Synesius' bishopric was short; Augustine's was long. Augustine's surviving epistolary correspondence is almost twice the size of that of Synesius. They had totally different orientations towards the Roman *imperium* – Synesius gravitated to Constantinople, where he had close connections with the imperial court, but particularly to Alexandria; Augustine, although anchored in Hippo Regius, looked not only east and west to the Latin-speaking provinces of Africa, but also to Italy. My intention in this paper, on the basis of the letters of these two men, is to investigate their cultural and political horizons, their networks, and how each of them responded to a particular crisis of their time.

Synesius' episcopate has been variously calculated;³ suffice it to say here that I am following the chronology established by Denis Roques in his 1989 study of Synesius' letters, which runs as follows: Synesius was elected bishop of Ptolomaïs probably in the

¹ See, for example, R. Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell'oriente romano. Rappresentazione ideologica e realtà politica (IV–V sec. d. C.)*, *Filologia e Critica* 53 (Rome 1987); E. Elm, *Die Macht der Weisheit. Das Bild des Bischofs in der Vita Augustini des Possidius und anderen spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Bischofsviten* (Brill 2003); P. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures (Hanover and London 2002); C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 2005); E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama. A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford 2008). For a recent response to Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, who argues that the late-antique bishop was a “lover of the poor” and a “champion of the poor”, see P. Allen, B. Neil, and W. Mayer, *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and Realities* (Leipzig 2009).

² I have used the edition of Synesius' letters by A. Garzya (ed.) and D. Roques (trans.), *Synésios de Cyrène. Correspondance*, 2 vols (Paris 2000), vols 2 and 3 in the collected works; for Augustine, *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana* (henceforward NBA), vol. 22, CSEL text with intro., trans., and notes by L. Carrozzi (Rome ²1996); vol. 21/2, CSEL text with intro., trans., and notes by L. Carrozzi (Rome ²1992); and vol. 23/A, CSEL text with intro., trans., and notes by L. Carrozzi (Rome 1992).

³ See D. Roques, *Études sur la Correspondance de Synésios de Cyrène*, Collection Latomus 205 (Brussels 1989), 11–64.

first half of February 411; he was consecrated bishop by Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria only on 1 January 412, and died mid-413.⁴ We are therefore considering an extremely short episcopate, which nonetheless, following this chronology, produced a total of forty-nine surviving letters out of 156. On the other hand, Augustine's episcopate in Hippo, which can be calculated accurately, extended over a thirty-five-year period⁵ and from it approximately 300 letters have come down to us – once again, of course, only a small portion of what he must have written during that time.

In what follows, I am arguing that one of the most important avenues of assistance for late antique bishops when they had to exercise forms of crisis management either with regard to *imperium* or church was their epistolary networks, which were often connected to how they construed culture and imperium.

2. Networks and Horizons

i. Synesius

Let us first consider briefly Synesius' horizons and networks as revealed in his letters.⁶ He was a cultivated Greek-speaker, a *curialis* who naturally gravitated east and north-east from Pentapolis. Because of the years he spent in Constantinople at the imperial court before his consecration as bishop of Ptolemais (here again the chronology is disputed⁷) and the contacts he retained in Constantinople, a considerable part of his networking involved friends and officials in the imperial capital. However, his Egyptian connections, both pagan

⁴ See Roques, *Études*, 64.

⁵ See the classic biography by P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography. A New Edition with an Epilogue* (London 2000).

⁶ A representative bibliography on Synesius would include in alphabetical order: C. Amande, "Il vescovo tardoantico tra filosofica e propositiva: Sinesio di Cirene (2^a parte)", in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. In occasione del XVI centenario della consecrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396–1996*. XXV Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità. Roma, 8–11 maggio 1996, vol. II – Padri Greci e Latini (Rome 1997), 437–444; J. Bregman, *Synesius of Cyrene, Philosopher-Bishop* (Berkeley 1982); A. Cameron and J. Long, with a contribution by L. Sherry, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley 1993) [on the date of Synesius' conversion]; L. Cracco Ruggini, "'Vir sanctus': il vescovo e il suo 'pubblico ufficio sacro' nella città", in É. Rebillard and C. Sotinel (eds), *L'évêque dans la cité du IV^e au V^e siècle: image et autorité*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 248 (Rome 1998), 3–15; M. Dzielska, (trans. F. Lyra), *Hypatia of Alexandria*, *Revealing Antiquity* 8 (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1995); A. Garzya, "Sinesio e Andronico", in *Hestiasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerta a Salvatore Costanza* (Messina 1998), 93–103; P. Graffigna, "Il vescovo tardoantico tra filosofica e propositiva: Sinesio di Cirene (1^a parte)", in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. In occasione del XVI centenario della consecrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396–1996*. XXV Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità. Roma, 8–11 maggio 1996, vol. II – Padri Greci e Latini (Rome 1997), 429–436; I. Hermelin, *Zu den Briefen des Bischofs Synesios* (Uppsala 1934); C. Lacombrade, *Synésios hellène et chrétien* (Paris 1951); J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, "The Date of Synesius' *De Providentia*", *Actes du 7^e Congrès de F.I.E.C.*, vol. 2 (Budapest 1984), 39–46; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, "Synesius and Municipal Politics of Cyrenaica in the 5th century A.D.", *Byzantion* 55 (1985), 146–164; *idem*, "Why did Synesius become Bishop of Ptolemais?", *Byzantion* 56 (1986), 180–195; *idem*, "The Rise of the Bishop in the Christian Roman Empire and the Successor Kingdoms", *Electrum* 1 (1997), 113–125; Lizzi, *Il potere* (85–111 on the Andronicus affair); Rapp, *Holy Bishops* (156–160 on Synesius as bishop); D. Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène et la Cyrénaïque du bas-empire*, *Études d'antiquités africaines* (Paris 1987) [366–370 on the Andronicus affair]; D. Roques, *Études*; D.T. Runia, *Studies in the Letters of Synesius*, unpublished MA thesis (University of Melbourne 1976); O. Seeck, "Studien zu Synesios", *Philologus* 52 (1894), 442–483; S. Vollenweider, *Neuplatonische und christliche Theologie bei Synesios von Kyrene* (Göttingen 1985).

⁷ See Roques, *Études*, 47–64, for a summary of the *status quaestionis*.

and Christian, were also significant – he had studied under the philosopher/mathematician Hypatia in Alexandria, was married there, and remained in touch with friends and fellow-students in the city after his departure for Pentapolis in 405. His younger brother Euoptius, his most frequent correspondent,⁸ to judge from the surviving letters, lived in Alexandria. Synesius was also consecrated bishop in that city by the patriarch Theophilus, uncle of Cyril of Alexandria, and reported back to Theophilus for the short duration of his episcopate in Ptolemaïs. The Latin language and, indeed, events in the West seem to have been unknown to him, and he affects a studied ignorance of Latin.⁹ His conception of his geographical network between Cyrene and Alexandria apparently admitted little of consequence between the two cities. In Letter 5, much more famous for the information it contains on late-antique shipping practices, he laments that at a certain point on his sea voyage from Cyrene to Pharos they had arrived in a barbarian *terra nullius*, having left cities, towns, and cultivated land twelve Roman miles or about twenty-five kilometres behind.¹⁰ A proud Cyrenaicean, Synesius perhaps somewhat surprisingly had little time for Athens, in particular for the so-called knowledge which affected travellers brought back from that city: “They differ in no wise from us ordinary mortals. They do not understand Aristotle and Plato better than we, and nevertheless they go about among us as demi-gods among mules”.¹¹ Elsewhere he states: “...I am a Libyan, I was born here, and it is here that I see the honoured tombs of my forefathers”.¹²

Synesius’ correspondents in Constantinople encompass friends, intellectuals, and civil and military officials, with some overlap between the three categories.¹³ In an example of Synesius’ crisis management, which we shall be studying shortly, namely the misdemeanours of the civil governor Andronicus, it is to his old friend Anastasius, the tutor of Emperor Arcadius’ children, to whom Synesius especially turns.¹⁴ In Syria Synesius is in touch with his old fellow-student Olympius. In Alexandria the correspondents of the bishop of Ptolemaïs range from his brother Euoptius to Hypatia, Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria (who had baptised, married, and ordained Synesius as priest and bishop), Theophilus’ nephew and successor Cyril, and friends and officials in the city. A number of letters are addressed to local officials in Pentapolis.

It is worth noting that Synesius became bishop without having first proceeded through the lower clerical ranks, he was reluctant to be separated from his wife after his episcopal consecration,¹⁵ and publicly confessed his inability to believe several core Christian beliefs, including the resurrection (Ep. 105). He also suffered from depression.¹⁶

⁸ On Synesius’ correspondence with his brother see Roques, *Études*, 161–196.

⁹ On Synesius’ studied ignorance of the Latin language, see Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 318 n. 84. On his lack of knowledge of events in the West, perhaps even of the sack of Rome by Alaric, see Lizzi, *Il potere*, 101.

¹⁰ See Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 13, 170–174.

¹¹ Ep. 56; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 74, 9–12; trans. A. Fitzgerald, *Letters of Synesius of Cyrene* (London 1926) 126.

¹² Ep. 124; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 257, 11–12: Λίβυς ὢν καὶ ἐνταῦθα γενόμενος καὶ τῶν πάππων τοὺς τάφους οὐκ ἀτίμους ὁρῶν.

¹³ For details of these see Roques, *Études*, *passim*.

¹⁴ Epp. 48 and 79.

¹⁵ Ep. 105. However, Ep. 42 informs us that the separation did take place.

¹⁶ See, for example, Epp. 10, 16, 89.

ii. Augustine

Like Synesius, Augustine was a native-born North African, but from a Latin-speaking background.¹⁷ His knowledge of classical Greek was apparently non-existent, and his familiarity with biblical and Patristic Greek was limited.¹⁸ The professional time he had spent in Rome and Milan ensured that his axis from Africa was to Italy. It was exegetical interest that put him in touch with Jerome in Palestine, while his horizons were also extended perforce in his attempts to refute Pelagianism, as we see tellingly in the letters Augustine addressed to John of Jerusalem (*Ep.* 179),¹⁹ Cyril of Alexandria (*Ep.* 4*),²⁰ and Atticus of Constantinople (*Ep.* 6*),²¹ normally speaking people beyond his ken. For the rest Augustine's epistolary horizons can be divided into two broad groups: those involving bishops, predominantly in Numidia,²² and those concerned with various other correspondents, whether private individuals or ecclesiastical/civil officials.²³

3. Examples of crisis management²⁴

i. Synesius

In his short bishopric of about eighteen months Synesius was faced with various crises, both private and public: the death of his last remaining child,²⁵ barbarian incursions which forced him to join the citizens of his town on the ramparts "several times a month",²⁶ and a crisis of conscience regarding his anxieties about being bishop.²⁷ However, Synesius' dispute between February and March 412 with the civil governor of Pentapolis, Andronicus, is one of the highlights of the correspondence of the bishop of Ptolemaïs,

¹⁷ The bibliography on Augustine is huge and what follows is therefore confined to his letters: L.-J. Wankenne, "La langue de la correspondance de Saint Augustin", *Revue Bénédictine* 94 (1984), 102–153; R.B. Eno, "Epistulae", in A.D. Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI 1999), 298–310; J. Divjak, "Epistulae", in C. Mayer *et al.* (eds), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, 2 vols (Basel 1986–1996), vol. 2, 893–1057; D.E. Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St Augustine*, *Patristic Studies* 4 (New York 2002); P. Allen, "The Horizons of a Bishop's World: the Letters of Augustine of Hippo", in W. Mayer, P. Allen, and L. Cross (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 4: The Spiritual Life* (Strathfield 2006), 327–337. On the "new" letters see *Les Lettres de saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak*, Communications présentées au Colloque des 20 et 21 septembre 1982, Études Augustiniennes (Paris 1983). On Augustine's epistolary networks, see F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo. Prosopographische, sozial- und ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Bochum 1993); É. Rebillard, "Augustin et le rituel épistolaire de l'élite sociale et culturelle de son temps. Éléments pour une analyse processuelle des relations de l'évêque et de la cité dans l'antiquité tardive", in Rebillard and Sotinel (eds), *L'Évêque dans la cité*, 127–152 (lit.).

¹⁸ See S. Angus, *The Sources of the First Ten Books of St Augustine's De Civitate Dei* (Princeton 1906), 276; more recently for the *status quaestionis* on the topic see G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo. Life and Controversies* (3rd ed., Norwich 2002), 394–395.

¹⁹ NBA 22, 884–895.

²⁰ NBA 23/A, 42–47. On the significance of this letter see J.-P. Bouhot, "Une lettre d'Augustin d'Hippone à Cyrille d'Alexandrie (*Epist.* 4*)", in *Les Lettres de Saint Augustin*, 147–154.

²¹ NBA 23/A, 52–63. See further G. Bonner, "Some remarks on Letters 4* and 6*", in *Les Lettres de Saint Augustin*, 155–164 at 159–164.

²² On these see Allen, "The Horizons of a Bishop's World".

²³ See Rebillard, "Augustin et le rituel épistolaire".

²⁴ See more generally B. Neil and P. Allen, "Displaced Peoples: Reflections from Late Antiquity on a Contemporary Crisis", *Pacifica* (2011: forthcoming).

²⁵ *Ep.* 89; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 211, 6–7.

²⁶ *Ep.* 89; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 211, 4: τοῦ μηνὸς πολλάκις. Cf. *Epp.* 69, 73, and 94.

²⁷ *Epp.* 11, 13, 41, 96, and 105.

comprising about one-eighth of the total number of his surviving letters.²⁸ The dispute is a remarkable example of both public and private crisis management, in that Andronicus was a cruel and rapacious official against whom, until the dénouement of the crisis, Synesius as bishop appeared ineffectual and depressed. The governor, a parvenu as Synesius likes to point out,²⁹ was known for his panoply of sophisticated instruments of torture and his merciless extortion of gold from members of the curial class. Andronicus is depicted by Synesius as the latest in a list of disasters to have befallen Pentapolis, from the earthquake of 365 over forty years earlier, to the recent plagues of grasshoppers, famine and fires of the year 411, and the raids of the Berber Ausurians in the same year.³⁰ Synesius, who was a relatively young man and presumably athletic because of his well-known passion for hunting, thought once of storming the ramparts of the prison and rescuing a fellow *curialis* who was being starved to death there by Andronicus, but decided against it.³¹ He *did* visit a well-born citizen who was being tortured while incarcerated, which infuriated Andronicus and led him to repeated blasphemies against Christ.³² The inhabitants looked to Synesius for help, not so much, it seems, because of his episcopal office as because of his standing as *curialis* in his native region and his previous successes in the civil realm as ambassador to Constantinople.³³ However, the bishop felt himself powerless, and, overcome also by the recent death of his oldest son and last remaining child, remained impervious to the consolations of philosophy and of prayer.³⁴ In his depressed state, he was even tempted to leave the episcopal office.³⁵

It needs to be remarked that our evidence of the dispute between official and bishop is one-sided in that we rely totally on Synesius' account, the main aim of which is to demonise his opponent.³⁶ What is significant in the crisis precipitated by the conduct of Andronicus is that neither bishop nor citizens appealed to the law. Nor apparently did the bishop of Ptolemais consult his patron and senior colleague in Africa, Theophilus, patriarch

²⁸ The letters which pertain to the dispute are 39, 41, 42, 72, 73, 79, 80, and 90. This episode has been studied, notably by C. Lacombrade, *Synésios hellène et chrétien* (Paris 1951), 237–248; Lizzi, *Il potere*, 85–111; Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène*, 366–370; Roques, *Études*, 137–159 (chronology); A. Garzya, “Sinesio e Andronico”, in *Hestiasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerta a Salvatore Costanza* (Messina 1998) 93–103; L. Cracco Ruggini, “‘Vir sanctus’: il vescovo e il suo ‘pubblico ufficio sacro’ nella città”, in Rebillard and Sotinel, *L'Évêque dans la cité*, 3–15; and I. Tanaseanu, “Between Philosophy and the Church: Synesius of Cyrene's Self-display in his Writings”, Communication presented at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London 2006 (VI.3 Theology, Texts, Orthodoxy), www.wralth.plus.com/byzcong/comms/Tanaseanu_paper.pdf, accessed 1 December 2009.

²⁹ See Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 128; cf. *Ep.* 41, ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 49, 237–258, on Synesius' rather pompous comparison of Andronicus' meagre pedigree, that of a *homo novus*, with his own curial status. On Synesius' penchant for self-display in this episode, see Tanaseanu, “Between Philosophy and the Church”.

³⁰ *Ep.* 42; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 70, 9; on the chronology see Roques, *Études*, 145.

³¹ *Ep.* 41; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 48, 230–249, 1; see Tanaseanu, “Between Philosophy and the Church”, n. 14, on the duty of bishops to visit the incarcerated.

³² *Ep.* 42; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 56, 50–54.

³³ *Ep.* 41; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 46, 166–178. Pace Lizzi, *Il potere*, 85, who ignores Synesius' civic standing in Pentapolis and sees him in this episode as the bishop-protector. Her comparison of Synesius' intervention with the pro-active efforts of Basil of Caesarea to deal with the severe famine in Cappadocia in 368 (p. 83) also ignores the standing that the wealthy and well-born Basil enjoyed, quite apart from his role as bishop.

³⁴ *Ep.* 41; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 47, 200–201.

³⁵ *Epp.* 41, vol. 2, 43, 86–89; 53, 363–53, 367.

³⁶ See further Lizzi, *Il potere*, 105.

of Alexandria. Instead Synesius pronounced an edict of excommunication on the governor, which was sent to all bishops in the region and was meant to extend to all churches in the Christian world (*Ep.* 41). Synesius had, however, just been consecrated bishop, and other longer-serving bishops objected to his excommunication of Andronicus, claiming that the governor needed to be given the chance to repent of his crimes.³⁷ Far from repenting, Andronicus subsequently confiscated and sold public property, and committed murder.³⁸ The sentence of excommunication was then ratified, banning Andronicus and his accomplice Thoas from churches and communion everywhere, and stating that Christians would refuse to shake Andronicus' hand or sit at table with him.³⁹ While sentences of excommunication were not new in this period, the fate imposed on Andronicus was harsh because the excommunicate should have had the possibility of doing penance and/or seeking asylum.⁴⁰ Synesius also effectively denied Andronicus the right of asylum, and there was consequently no option for the official but to leave town and his job. At the end of March 412, Synesius wrote to his friend Anastasius in Constantinople asking him to secure justice at the imperial court for the victims of Andronicus.⁴¹ However, a second redaction of *Epistula* 42, in which Andronicus' excommunication is promulgated, demonstrates that Synesius had a change of heart about the governor's fate and sought to have the sentence mitigated.⁴² To this effect he wrote to Theophilus,⁴³ whom, as we noted before, he had not bothered to consult in the first instance. Nonetheless, in a stroke of administrative genius, albeit one that could not be considered civilly legal, the bishop of Ptolemaïs had succeeded in ridding himself and his people of a crisis of considerable proportions. Claudia Rapp notes that this bishop had "a new arsenal of ecclesiastical instruments of reprimand and punishment, including excommunication".⁴⁴ We can compare the import of *Epistula* 156, where Synesius again intervenes in his role as *curialis*-bishop (a kind of *pater populi*, as the editor's note⁴⁵) in securing justice: "My job is to serve all those I can."⁴⁶

ii. Augustine

In his long episcopate, Augustine had to manage both ongoing crises, ranging from those presented by the Donatists and later by the Pelagians, and apparently one-off crises precipitated by the Galatian people-smugglers,⁴⁷ the question of indentured labour of free-born children,⁴⁸ and the scandalous case of Augustine's rapacious *bête noir*, Bishop Antoninus of Fussala (422/423), the latter being a clear ecclesiastical case in which the

³⁷ *Ep.* 72; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 192, 18–28.

³⁸ *Ep.* 72; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 193, 30–32.

³⁹ *Ep.* 42; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 2, 57, 83–86.

⁴⁰ Although the first legislation recognizing the right of ecclesiastical asylum was not passed until 21 November 419 in the West and 23 March 431 in the East; see further Roques, *Études*, 369.

⁴¹ *Ep.* 79. Lizzi, *Il potere*, 103, notes on the basis of *Ep.* 48 to Anastasius that Synesius' representations to Constantinople received a cold reception.

⁴² On the redaction see Lizzi, *Il potere*, 110; Garzya, "Sinesio e Andronico"; Garzya and Roques, *Correspondance*, 143 n. 3.

⁴³ *Ep.* 90.

⁴⁴ Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 160.

⁴⁵ Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 307 n. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 156 to the lawyer Dometian; ed. Garzya and Roques, vol. 3, 306–307, at 307, 4–5: Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐμὸν εἶναι ποιεῖν οἷός τινος ἀνθρώπου.

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 10*.

⁴⁸ *Epp.* 10* and 24*; see further M. Humbert, "Enfants à louer ou à vendre: Augustin et l'autorité parentale (*Ep.* 10* et 24*)", in *Les Lettres de Saint Augustin*, 189–204.

bishop of Hippo appealed to the authority of the bishop of Rome.⁴⁹ However, it is an episode incited by gang violence which remained condemned by the civil authorities that I want to concentrate on here. In late antiquity, as now, gang violence was especially associated with religious tensions and sporting events.⁵⁰ A very instructive example of how a bishop managed or, as it turns out, mismanaged a crisis provoked by religious tension, in this case between so-called pagans and Christians, is the case of Possidius, bishop of Calama, a small town in the hinterland of Augustine's bishopric of Hippo Regius. Possidius was to become Augustine's biographer. We owe our knowledge of this episode almost totally to two of Augustine's letters (*Epp.* 91 and 104), because the bishop of Hippo, as Possidius' senior colleague, also became embroiled in the dispute with imperial authority.⁵¹ Recently this episode has been studied carefully by Erika Hermanowicz from a legal angle. Here I will be more interested in episcopal strategies in the face of a crisis involving the local elite.

In *Epistula* 91, written in 408 or 409 to Nectarius, a city official of Calama, Augustine details the events which were to prove critical for Possidius and subsequently for the bishop of Hippo himself. On 1 June 408 a group of "pagans", walking and dancing in procession and possibly carrying a statue of a pagan god, approached Possidius' basilica. When they were intercepted by the clergy, the group began throwing stones at the church. It was only after a week that the bishop went to the secular officials demanding protection and recompense on the basis of the laws which prohibited the celebration of pagan festivals. When he received no clear answer, the rioters stoned the church again, and when Possidius again received no legal satisfaction from the officials, the church was stoned a third time. During all this commotion we are told that the clergy were powerless.⁵²

Next the crowd threw fire at the church and the clergy, who were forced to scatter and go into hiding. The bishop himself, sheltering in a small space, heard the crowd calling for his death. It seems that nobody in the town tried to manage the crowd, who went on to burn the church and loot church property. Some Christians were killed. When things had calmed down, Augustine, as one of Possidius' senior colleagues, went to Calama to help Possidius vindicate his legal cause with the town's magistrates, but this intervention was also to no avail.⁵³ The bishops' only hope was to take their advocacy off-shore and appeal to a higher authority, namely the imperial court in Ravenna, to uphold both older and more recent legislation against pagans and rioters. Possidius accordingly set out for Ravenna,⁵⁴

⁴⁹ *Ep.* 20*. See further W. Frend, "Fussala, Augustine's crisis of credibility (*Epist.* 20*)", S. Lancel, "L'affaire d'Antonius de Fussala: pays, choses et gens de la Numidie d'Hippone saisis dans la durée d'une procédure d'enquête épiscopale", and C. Munier, "La question des appels à Rome d'après la Lettre 20* d'Augustin", 251–265, 267–285, and 287–299, respectively, in *Les Lettres de Saint Augustin*.

⁵⁰ See further T.E. Gregory, *Vox Populi. Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century A.D.* (Columbus, OH 1979); M. Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ. Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley 2005); H.A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and Practices* (Ashgate 2006).

⁵¹ See in general on this episode R. Dodaro, "Augustine's Secular City", in R. Dodaro and G. Lawless (eds), *Augustine and His Critics. Essays in Honor of Gerald Bonner* (New York 2000) 231–259; P.I. Kaufman, "Patience and/or Politics: Augustine and the Crisis at Calama, 408–409", *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003), 22–35; R. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge 2004); E.T. Hermanowicz, "Catholic Bishops and Appeals to the Imperial Court: a Legal Study of the Calama riots in 408", *JECS* 12 (2004), 481–521; *eadem*, *Possidius of Calama*, 156–187 and bibliography.

⁵² *Ep.* 91.8; NBA 21/2, 788–790.

⁵³ *Ep.* 91.10; *ibid.* 792–794.

⁵⁴ Augustine, *Ep.* 101.1; *ibid.*, 940.

although, because of an axis of influence determined by an African episcopal conference, he was forced to report to the bishop of Rome on the way.

Eventually the imperium upheld Possidius' position in the *Sirmondian Constitution* 14,⁵⁵ and insisted on capital punishment for those who had acted violently in Calama against the church. Augustine reacted negatively to this ruling, addressing himself to the proconsul for Africa, Donatus, in order to stop the death penalty being implemented for heretics (*Ep.* 100).⁵⁶ We are not clear where Possidius himself stood on the question.⁵⁷

This entire episode as revealed mostly in Augustine's letters does not show Possidius in a favourable light. The bishop of Calama may have been unpopular with pagan or heretical elements and the elite in his city, but the fact remains that he was ineffectual in a crisis situation and unable to command the respect of the town's officials when he attempted to cite the law to them. It needs to be noted that the intervention of Augustine as senior bishop on Possidius' behalf to resolve the local crisis and his subsequent correspondence with the prominent layman, Nectarius, was also ineffectual in the short term. Referring the whole matter to the emperor was perhaps the only option, but it was an option born of desperation and there was no guarantee that laws effected in Ravenna would be respected in Calama.⁵⁸ This is not a successful example of episcopal crisis management, but is a very good example of what we can learn about the topic from a bishop's letters.

Conclusion

Letters in Christian antiquity, as in the classical period, were the main means of communication and knowledge transfer. Thus it is not surprising that they offer us an unparalleled source for assessing how late-antique bishops regarded imperium or managed crises. That having been said, we must acknowledge that the mortality rate of letters generally in Christian antiquity is huge. Even surviving letter-collections which we may regard as relatively large, such as those of the bishops Augustine, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Severus of Antioch, probably represent no more than a fraction of the author's total epistolographical output.⁵⁹ From some bishops, even important ones like Caesarius of Arles, we have no letters at all. Thus we may rightly wonder how many examples of episcopal letters have been lost to us.

The two main examples I have adduced from episcopal letters – Synesius' handling of the case of a civil official, and the difficulties experienced by Possidius and Augustine with local representatives of the *imperium* in the town of Calama – give some idea of the strategies which late-antique bishops could adopt in dealing with critical situations.

As we know, at the time of the Andronicus affair Synesius was a new bishop, who had personal difficulties, and problems with central aspects of Christian doctrine. It is

⁵⁵ *CTh XVI*, 918–919; trans. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton 1952; repr. New York 2001), 484–485.

⁵⁶ On Augustine's tendency to leniency, see P. Brown, "St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion", *JRS* 54 (1964), 107–116; F.H. Russell, "Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's coercion by words", in W. Klingshirn and M. Vessey (eds), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor 1999), 155–150; Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 98–99.

⁵⁷ Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 157, suggests that the two bishops may even have fallen out over the issue.

⁵⁸ See further Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 166.

⁵⁹ See my calculation for Severus in P. Allen, "Severus of Antioch and Pastoral Care", in P. Allen, W. Mayer, and L. Cross (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 2 (Everton Park 1999) 387–400 at 388–389.

consequently no exaggeration to say that in the Andronicus affair, he was acting more as a *curialis* than a bishop: he was in good standing with the *imperium* in Constantinople and with the local people, and as a very new bishop appears to have been overruled by more senior colleagues with regard to the severity of his sentence on Andronicus. Roques' comment that Synesius can be ranked among the authentic protectors of God's people only with caution is therefore apposite.⁶⁰ In any case, Synesius' representations to his influential friends in the imperial court at Constantinople concerning the Andronicus affair are more explicit than those he made to his diocesan bishops.⁶¹ All of this tends to support Lizzi's contention that in this event Synesius' political motives are more apparent than his religious ones.⁶²

Augustine and Possidius, for their part, were intent on the enforcement of imperial laws dealing with heretics and pagans, and on protecting the rights of the bishopric of Calama, even if this involved securing the intervention of the imperial court in Ravenna. Augustine's well-known leniency in punishing the perpetrators of the Calama riots stands in contrast to Synesius' initially severe sentence of excommunication against Andronicus. It must remain doubtful, however, whether Synesius was following a harsher tradition of the patriarchate of Alexandria rather than a softer approach of the Latin-speaking bishoprics of North Africa.⁶³

These considerations about late-antique bishops' axes, horizons, and culture demonstrate the validity of the arguments adduced by several scholars recently,⁶⁴ namely that these bishops were often impotent in the face of ecclesiastical or civil crisis, and that what today we call human rights were not issues for them.⁶⁵ This suggests that our picture of the *modus operandi* of the late-antique bishop is far from being complete.

⁶⁰ *Études*, 371.

⁶¹ Lizzi, *Il potere*, 87.

⁶² Lizzi, *Il potere*, 107.

⁶³ So runs the argument of Roques, *Études*, 368, who also includes Basil of Caesarea among the more "charitable" bishops.

⁶⁴ See C. Lepelley, "Facing Wealth and Poverty: Defining Augustine's Social Doctrine", The Saint Augustine Lecture 2006, *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), 1–17 at 16–17; K. Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine* (Philadelphia 2007), 38–43; Allen, Neil, and Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*.

⁶⁵ See, for example, S.R. Holman, "The Entitled Poor. Human Rights Language in the Cappadocians", *Doctores Ecclesiae*, in *Pro Ecclesia* 9/4 (2000), 476–488.

Bronwen Neil

Imperial Benefactions to the Fifth-century Roman Church

Altogether, the conversion of Constantine brought a Christian church, previously characterized by well-organized but essentially inward looking charitable endeavors, into a world in which the more outward-going “civic” ideal of public benefaction was still alive...The emperor remained a towering example of old-fashioned euergetism.¹

In the work cited above, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, Peter Brown describes the finding of recent scholarship that the traditional “civic” definition of the community was largely maintained throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, as “one of the most challenging discoveries of recent scholarship”.² It does indeed pose a challenge to the scholarship of Patlagean, who first posited the move in the Late Antique period (400–600 CE) from a civic model of societal relations to an economic model.³ Patlagean identified a shift in Late Antiquity from a classical Greco-Roman model where the rich were only obliged to act as patron to other citizens within their clientele, which was limited to an urban setting, to a Christian one where the web of obligations was considerably broadened to include the unknown poor, who may not be either citizens or city dwellers. In Rome, the Senate traditionally looked after public *munera*: staging games, theatrical performances, and races; providing oil for heating public baths; maintaining public buildings. In smaller cities, such as Milan, town councillors (*curiales*) were responsible for liturgical expenses. By the end of the fourth century, however, the curial class like the Roman Senate was in sharp decline, and both were losing the power and material substance to provide these services. The loss of *curiales* to the *munera*-exempt clergy was another reason for the weakening of the office.⁴

The place of the bishop in this expansion of networks of obligation at first seems quite obvious. The bishop was required to step in and fill the role of patron where the powers of the Senate or municipal governor left off, supplying the very poor with food and clothing, and often some sort of shelter. But on closer analysis, it becomes evident that Late Antique bishops, and especially the bishop of Rome, had to fill competing philanthropic roles, and eventually took over some of the roles previously managed by the imperial office.

¹ P. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures, Hanover-London 2002), 27.

² Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, 27.

³ E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4e–7e siècles* (Paris 1977).

⁴ Boniface (418–422) decreed that no slave, or anyone under obligation to a *curia* or anything else, should become a cleric: *LP* Boniface ch. 5, ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, rev. edn by C. Vogel, 3 vols (Paris 1955–57) 1, 227: *Nec servum clericum fieri, nec obnoxium curiae vel cuiuslibet rei*. Similar injunctions were made by emperors, for example *Codex Theodosianus* (CTh) 16.2.6, ed. T. Mommsen, trans. J. Rougé, *Code Théodosien XVI* (Sources chrétiennes 497, Paris 2005), 132: *Neque vulgari consensu neque quibuslibet petentibus sub specie clericorum a muneribus publicis uacatio deferatur...*. On this interdiction see A. Di Berardino, “‘The poor must be supported by the wealth of the churches’ (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.2.6)”, in G.D. Dunn, D. Luckensmeyer and L. Cross (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 5: Poverty and Riches* (Strathfield 2009), 249–268.

The first of these roles on behalf of the city of Rome was acting as patron to the poor or less well-off within the church community, above all its own clergy. Secondly, bishops were called upon to champion the cause of the very poor or destitute, the “invisible” poor who included widows, orphans,⁵ refugees,⁶ the sick and the aged who had no family networks of support. Other private citizens also acted in this role, usually Christian converts of the senatorial class. For example, the first Roman *xenodochion* or hostel for housing travellers was built at Portus Romanus by the Christian senator Pammachius in 396–397 with the aid of the widow Fabiola.⁷ Thirdly, bishops fulfilled the so-called “civic” role of public evergetism. It is in respect to the third role, that of civic evergetism, that we will examine the partnership formed between emperor and bishop in the fifth century.⁸

Using the pontificates of Sixtus III (432–440) and Leo I (440–461) as case studies, I will examine the implications of imperial sponsorship, or lack thereof, on the civic activities of the bishop of Rome in this period. Gillett warns us against assuming that episcopal programmes were undertaken independent of imperial authority: “Sixtus and Leo transformed the urban landscape of Rome and its patterns of evergetism: their works, often seen as an expression of the popes’ new-found local authority within the city of Rome, occurred in the presence, not the absence, of the western emperors.”⁹ I will argue that the western emperors in this period willingly handed over some of their private and public responsibilities to form a new partnership with the bishops of Rome, both for reasons of expediency and because the ideological agenda that had kept their roles in this sphere quite separate up until then was no longer in play. There are four areas under consideration here: 1. church building programmes; 2. famine relief; 3. raising tribute; and 4. ransoming prisoners.

I. Church building programmes

The provision of churches in fifth-century Rome was largely undertaken in the presence of the emperor resident in the city and at imperial expense. However, imperial contributions to the Church were always considered to belong to the class of private rather than public benefactions.¹⁰ This set up a curious patronage relationship between the western emperor and the bishop of Rome. Theft and destruction accompanying Alaric’s sack of Rome in 410 had left the church’s wealth severely depleted.¹¹ Both Sixtus III and his successor Leo accepted aid from the western emperors, especially Valentinian III, for rebuilding purposes and new church constructions. Empreses were also involved: for example, Galla Placidia contributed to repairs of *San Paolo fuori le mura*, and Licinia Eudoxia to the building of the

⁵ On the care of widows and orphans in Rome in the early Christian period, see J.-U. Krause, *Witwen und Waisen im Römischen Reich*, 4: *Witwen und Waisen im frühen Christentum* (Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien 19, Stuttgart 1995).

⁶ Especially, in Rome, the Manichees who had fled from Vandal invasions in North Africa.

⁷ Jerome, *Ep.* 66.11 to Pammachius, ed. I. Hilberg, *Hieronymus Epistularum Pars I, Epistulae I–LXX* (CSEL 54, Vienna 1996), 661.

⁸ We are not talking here about whether care for the poor was or should be considered as civic evergetism in fifth-century Rome. For a discussion of this question, see B. Neil, “Models of Gift Giving in the Preaching of Leo the Great,” *J ECS* 18 (2010), 225–259.

⁹ A. Gillett, “Rome, Ravenna and the Last Western Emperors”, *PBSR* (2001: 131–167), 145.

¹⁰ R. Lim, “People as Power: Games, Munificence, and Contested Topography”, in W.V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supp. Series 33, Portsmouth RI 1999: 265–281), 275 and n. 54.

¹¹ See G.D. Dunn, “The Care of the Poor in Rome and Alaric’s Sieges”, in *Prayer and Spirituality 5: Poverty and Riches* (Strathfield 2009), 319–333.

new *San Pietro in Vincoli*.¹² Gillett observes that the imperial family were motivated to patronize the “lavish papal recasting of the Roman city-scape” through their identification with the cult of St Peter.¹³ While bishops of Rome could exercise their authority over questions of where and how to spend imperial money, the money available to them from the imperial purse for the building and refurbishment of churches was steadily decreasing from the mid-fifth century. Properties belonging to the pope and their revenues were often donated for the upkeep of churches according to the *Liber Pontificalis* [=LP], even as early as Silvester.¹⁴ While Brown may be correct in stating that Late Antique clergy did not commonly come from aristocratic backgrounds,¹⁵ and thus needed regular financial support from their fellow believers, this was not true of most bishops. The fourth century saw the “aristocratisation” of the episcopal office, and Rome was not exempt.¹⁶ It is sufficient to recall the pre-clerical career of Ambrose, who was governor of Aemilia-Liguria before becoming bishop of Milan. Innocent I followed his father Anastasius I in taking up the papal office in 401/402.

Innocent I clearly appreciated the advantages of using the existing tradition of civic evergetism to improve the Roman church’s material foundations. As Salzman comments, “The on-going role of the elite as civic patrons led certain bishops to try to involve these same members of the élite as patrons of Christian buildings.”¹⁷ As examples, Salzman cites the funds given to Innocent by the urban prefect Longinianus (401–402) for the building of a baptistery, and by the aristocrat Vestina for a basilica of SS Gervasius and Protasius (now San Vitale in Rome). Vestina stipulated in her will that funds for this purpose were to be raised from the sale of her jewelry.¹⁸

The precedent for imperial donations to the church of Rome was set by the Constantine the Great. The bulk of the long entry in LP on Silvester (314–335), the first bishop of Rome to serve imperial Christianity, concerns foundations made by the emperor Constantine at the petition of the bishop. Constantine donated buildings and their adornments of silver plate, perfumes, and supporting estates and farms, and even islands such as Sardinia, Misenum and Matidia.¹⁹ The early imperial church also benefited from confiscations made during the persecutions. For example, the property of a Christian woman named Cyriaces, which had been seized by the fisc in the earlier persecutions, was presented to the new basilica of St Laurence on *via Tiburtina*.²⁰ LP Silvester records the donation by the

¹² Gillett, “Rome, Ravenna”, 145.

¹³ Gillett, “Rome, Ravenna”, 165.

¹⁴ See for example the LP entries for Damasus (366–384), Innocent I (401/401–417), and Sixtus (432–440). It should be kept in mind that anything before Anastasius II’s entry (496–498) is generally agreed to be of little historical value, as these entries were compiled in the early sixth century. Nevertheless, the earlier entries were compiled on the basis of contemporary financial records, so they have something to offer the reader who is looking for a sense of what mattered to the fifth-century papacy.

¹⁵ Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, 20, and 22; L.W. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire: Contradictions and Accommodations* (Texts and Studies in Religion, New York - Toronto 1980), 73 points out that most preaching against avarice was directed against the clergy.

¹⁶ See C. Lepellet, “Le patronat episcopal aux IV^e et V^e siècles: continuités et ruptures avec le patronat classique”, in E. Rebillard and C. Sotinel (eds), *L’Évêque dans la cite du IV^e au V^e siècle. Image et autorité* (Rome 1998: 17–33), 21.

¹⁷ M. Salzman, “The Christianization of Sacred Time and Sacred Space”, in W.V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supp. Series 33* (Portsmouth RI 1999: 123–134), 133.

¹⁸ LP Innocent, ch. 3, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 220.

¹⁹ LP Silvester, ch. 27, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 183.

²⁰ LP Silvester, ch. 25, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 182.

aristocrat Gallicanus, ordinary consul in 317,²¹ to the basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and John the Baptist at Ostia of a silver crown with dolphins, a silver chalice, a silver wine cup (*ama*), estates in Sabine territory and the territory of Suessa, and two farms, one in Velitrae and one on the *via Claudia*, with a combined annual revenue of 869 *solidi*. Constantine's largesse did not stop at Rome and its environs, of course.²² *LP* Silvester also records imperial donations to churches in the cities of Albanum, Capua, and Naples. Revenues for the upkeep of Roman churches also came from outside Italy: *LP* Silvester mentions estates in Africa, Greece and Numidia. In all this, Constantine is represented as an independent agent, except for one brief interpolation that comments: "Then the emperor Constantine built <at bishop Silvester's request> a basilica to St Peter the Apostle, at the Temple of Apollo."²³ Of course, we should not naively accept such accounts as evidence of benign imperial support for the church at large. This is clear from the records of generous contributions made by the sometime Arian emperor, Constantius II (337–361).²⁴

i. Sixtus III and Valentinian III

Like other *LP* entries, the entry for Sixtus III concludes with a lengthy list of the foundations established by the pope. These included the basilica of St Mary Major, the decoration of the confession at St Peter's, a *confessio* for St Laurence with porphyry columns, a silver altar and *confessio*, a silver statue of St Laurence weighing 200 pounds, a basilica dedicated to St Laurence, a monastery at the Catacombs, and a baptistery font at St Mary's, again with porphyry columns, as in the Baptistery of St John Lateran. It also provides lists of the gold and silver plate and precious stones that were presented to various *basilicae* – for example, three gold *scyphi*, one each for St Peter's, St Paul's and St Laurence's, and fifteen gold service chalices.²⁵ Sixtus donated 414 pounds of silver and 20 pounds of gold to liturgical furnishings for the basilica of St Laurence alone. He also approved the foundations undertaken by other bishops in the city, such as the basilica of St Sabina built by Bishop Peter.²⁶ As in the past, prominent citizens made significant contributions to the Roman church under Sixtus. The praetorian prefect Petronius Maximus

²¹ An identification established by E.J. Champlin, "Gallicanus (Consul 317)", *Phoenix* 36 (1982), 71–76. *LP* Silvester, ch. 29, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 184.

²² C. Sotinel, "Le don chrétien et ses retombées sur l'économie dans l'Antiquité Tardive", in J.-P. Caillet and J.-M. Carrié (eds), *Économie et Religion dans l'Antiquité Tardive*, *Antiquité Tardive* 14 (Turnhout 2006), 105–116, at 111 notes that such imperial gifts were of marginal importance compared with the structural assistance given to churches by transfer of revenues and fiscal privileges.

²³ *LP* Silvester, ch. 16, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 176: *Eodem tempore Augustus Constantinus fecit basilicam beato Petro apostolo in templum Apollinis*. trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (*Liber Pontificalis*): *The ancient biographies of the first ninety Roman bishops to AD 715*, 2nd edn (Liverpool 2000) [= *LP* 1], 19. On such interpolations, Davis notes in his introduction (*LP* 1, xlix): "Down to 530 they may reflect the text of the first edition".

²⁴ Davis, *LP* 1, xxx, reiterates this point: "Munificent activity by Constantius is all the more likely in view of the unpopularity he had acquired through his intervention in the affairs of the Roman church."

²⁵ *LP* Sixtus, ch. 7, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 234. The first two of these gold *scyphi* weighed six pounds, the third, for St Laurence's, weighed three pounds. The fifteen gold service chalices each weighed one pound of gold. The term *scyphus* was used to refer either to the large wine chalices used to serve extra wine at the altar, in addition to the main chalice, or to the principal chalice itself: see Davis, *LP* 1, 116, Glossary, s.v. "*ama*".

²⁶ *LP* Sixtus, ch. 8, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 235.

(twice *praefectus urbis Romae*, in 420–421 and 421/39) proved a great evergetist for the city, restoring St Peter's basilica and building a new forum on *mons Caelius*.²⁷

An impressive program of *freschi* was undertaken in the apse and nave of St Mary Major, perhaps under the design and oversight of Leo as archdeacon to Sixtus III.²⁸ The inscription in the apse reveals that Sixtus was fulfilling a civic function in providing these mosaics for the edification of the “common people of God”.²⁹

LP Sixtus is concerned to stress the imperial contribution to this ambitious building programme: at the pope's request, Valentinian replaced the *fastigium* in St John Lateran, after the original had been stolen by barbarians. The new screen weighed 1610 pounds of silver.³⁰ The emperor would have appreciated the significant impression made by the screen with its huge bronze columns inside the chancel, housing two figures of Christ: one facing the congregation and the altar, and the other enthroned and facing the bishop and clergy in the apse.³¹ Again at the pope's request, Valentinian presented a gold image with 12 portals, the Saviour and 12 apostles over the confession of St Peter. In Sixtus' pontificate the emperor also built a silver *confessio* for St Paul's weighing 200 pounds.³² Davis notes that the agreement of the emperor would have been crucial to Sixtus' plans for the new basilica dedicated to Rome's favourite martyr Laurence, called St Laurence in *Lucina*, because the site encroached on imperial property. This property included “the dial area of the *horologium* of Augustus, a massive sundial with an obelisk for its gnomon.”³³ This was part of the recasting of the pagan urban landscape.

Whence came the financial resources for such activities? While imperial donations must have constituted a major source, there were other ways in which important bishops might amass wealth, through aristocratic legacies,³⁴ property confiscations, and the revenue produced from tax-free church property holdings. Were these properties privately owned by individual bishops of Rome or inherited with the office? For instance, a charge (the details of which are glossed over in LP) was brought against Sixtus III by one Bassus. After Sixtus was acquitted, all of Bassus' estates and goods were merged “with the catholic church” by command of Emperor Valentinian and his mother, Placidia. The level of luxury enjoyed by

²⁷ J.R. Martindale, *PLRE* II: AD 395–527, “Petronius Maximus 22”, 749–751; see discussion by Gillett, “Rome, Ravenna”, 148.

²⁸ J.D. Sieger, “Visual Metaphor as Theology: Leo the Great's Sermons on the Incarnation and the Arch Mosaics at S. Maria Maggiore”, *Gesta* 26/2 (1987: 83–91), 88 n. 67, following the suggestion of R. Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton 1980), 51.

²⁹ *Xystus episcopus plebi Dei*. ed. E. Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres* 1 (Berlin 1925) [=ILCV 1], 182, no. 975; J.-P. Caillet, *L'évergétisme monumental Chrétien en Italie et à ses marges d'après l'épigraphie des pavements de mosaïque (IV^e–VII^e s.)* (Collection de l'École française de Rome 175, Rome 1993), 14–15, notes that a similar phrase is used in the dedicatory inscription of Hilarus (461–468) in the Baptistry of S. Giovanni in Laterano: ILCV 1, 183, no. 978.

³⁰ LP Sixtus, ch. 4, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 233.

³¹ Davis, LP 1, 125–126, adopts Krautheimer's definition of the *fastigium* “an arched and pedimented lintel colonnade, like that under which the Emperor revealed himself to his subjects at court, as it survived in Diocletian's palace at Spalato (Split).” Davis, LP 1, 125, describes the Lateran *fastigium* as “a gabled, colonnaded screen sheltering the figures, the chandeliers and the crowns hanging over them.”

³² LP Sixtus, ch. 5, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 233.

³³ Davis, LP 1, Introduction, xl. Lim, “People as Power”, 266 noted that imperial permission was required for the construction of all new buildings in Rome in the late fourth century, citing *CTH* 15.1.11, 15.1.16, 15.1.17, and 15.1.19, issued between 364 and 376.

³⁴ The number of these and revenue thereby generated greatly increased after the pontificate of Damasus: see C. Pietri, *Roma Christiana: recherches sur l'église de Rome, son organization, sa politique, son idéologie de Militiade à Sixte (331–440)* (Rome 1976), 567–573.

the bishops of Rome was criticized even by pagan contemporaries such as the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who accuses them of hiding their faults behind the greatness of the city of Rome, making an unfavourable comparison between their urban ostentation and the rustic simplicity of provincial bishops. Of the bishops of Rome, he remarks³⁵

These men might be truly happy, if they would disregard the greatness of the city behind which they hide their faults, and live after the manner of some provincial bishops, whose moderation in food and drink, plain apparel also, and gaze fixed upon the earth, commend them to the Eternal Deity and to his true servants as pure and reverent men.

ii. Leo I and the Western Roman Emperors³⁶

Sixtus' entry in *LP* was the last to mention imperial benefaction to the Roman church. *LP* Leo makes no mention of any emperor or empress. It seems that the limits of imperial largesse were largely established by this stage of the fifth century. No great expenditures on new church buildings or furnishings are attributed to Leo. Nevertheless, with the aid of private imperial donations from Galla Placidia,³⁷ Leo renewed St Paul's after it had been damaged by lightning. He also constructed an apse-vault in St John Lateran. He built a single basilica dedicated to the martyr and bishop of Rome Cornelius (251–253) outside the city on the Appian Way, near the catacombs of Callistus, and established a (no longer surviving) monastery at St Peter's,³⁸ without any donations of precious metals or gems. He arranged for the installation of pictorial cycles at the three basilicae of St Peter, St Paul and the Lateran, but may not have paid for them himself.³⁹ *LP* Leo informs us that after "the Vandal disaster" Leo had to replace all the consecrated silver services throughout all the endowed churches (*tituli*) by melting down six silver water-jars: two each for St Peter's basilica, St Paul's and St John Lateran. These had been gifts of Constantine and amounted to 600 pounds of silver. The fact that the bishop of Rome was forced to melt down large silver plate for this purpose points to what we might call a severe "cash-flow problem", later exacerbated by the necessity of paying ransom and tribute to the Goths and Huns.

³⁵ *Qui esse poterant beati re vera, si magnitudine urbis despecta, quam vitiis opponunt, ad imitationem antistitum quorundam provincialium viverent, quos tenuitas edendi potandique parcissime, vilitas etiam indumentorum, et supercilia humum spectantia, perpetuo numini, verisque eius cultoribus, ut puros commendant, et verecundos: Amm. Marc., Res Gestae 27.3.15, ed. and trans. John C. Rolfe, Ammianus Marcellinus 3 (Loeb Classical Library 331, Cambridge MA 1986), 20–21.*

³⁶ Petronius Maximus (17 March – 22 May 455) succeeded Valentinian III as *augustus* upon the latter's murder in Rome in 455, allegedly instigated by Petronius. Petronius's successor, the former Gallic *magister utriusque militiae* Avitus, lasted only a year as *augustus* (455–456) before he was deposed in the revolt of generals Majorian and Ricimer in October 456. Majorian (457–461) succeeded Petronius but never lived in Rome, residing in Ravenna before moving to Arles for campaigns against the Vandals and Burgundians. See the discussion of these three emperors and their places of residence in Gillett, "Rome, Ravenna", 148–151.

³⁷ For the inscription set up to honour Placidia beneath the triumphal arch at St Paul's, see *ILCV* 1, 342, no. 1761b: *Placidiae pia mens operis decus omne paterni gaudet pontificis studio splendere Leonis*. In this inscription Placidia is concerned to associate herself with Pope Leo.

³⁸ An interpolator adds: "which is called that of saints John and Paul"; trans. Davis, *LP* 1, 40.

³⁹ *LP* Leo, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 239. In any case, these may well have been completed over a number of years: James, *Rome*, 289 and 294. See Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 240, nn. 6 and 7 on the restoration of St Peter's and repair of the roof of St Paul's; and 241 n. 8 on the apse decoration at the Lateran which Duchesne dates to the pontificate of Celestine (422–432) on the basis of epigraphic evidence.

Apart from this single mention of the Vandal disaster, *LP* gives no further details of the invasions of Attila and Geiseric.

Unfortunately, we do not have any information on Leo's family background, except that he was the son of an otherwise unknown Quintianus and came from Tuscany, so we cannot judge what personal wealth he might have brought to the position. Leo is unusual in that he did not donate properties for the upkeep of churches, but then neither did his successor Hilary (461–468), under whose rule the level of conspicuous consumption enjoyed by Sixtus seems to have resurfaced. Leo did, however, encourage monumental evergetism by elite Christians. The virgin Demetrias, wealthy daughter of the Anicii family, had a basilica dedicated to St Stephen on her estate on the Latin Way. This fact is given pride of place in the *LP* entry for Leo, appearing directly after his dates,⁴⁰ and Leo is recognized in a dedicatory inscription that appeared on Demetrias' church, showing that the classical form of public giving in return for social recognition was alive and well in mid-fifth century Rome.⁴¹ Even some popes indulged in a little self-advertisement. An inscription by Pope Damasus (366–384) at the basilica of St Laurence in *Damaso* epitomizes the Christian expression of classical *philotimia* without shame: "I confess I wished to build a new roof for the archives, / to add columns on right and left besides/ which would keep the name of Damasus intact forever."⁴² With the help of the ex-consul Marinianus,⁴³ Leo renewed St Peter's after it had been damaged by fire. It seems that Gillett's "lavish papal recasting of the Roman city-scape" does not really apply to Leo's building activities.

Leo's building campaign might have been limited by straitened finances, but the modest foundations he made show a sharp appreciation of the symbolic significance of maintaining visible shrines, especially in relation to the apostles Peter and Paul, and the martyr and former bishop of Rome, Cornelius. Cornelius had been involved in moving the remains of the apostles Peter and Paul from the catacombs to more suitable accommodation,⁴⁴ and in his homilies and letters he certainly showed himself to be a champion of the cult of St Peter, with which the popes, emperors and leading families such as the Anicii were so keen to associate themselves.⁴⁵

By the end of Leo's pontificate the time of the western Roman emperors is almost finished, with the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in Ravenna in 476 by Odoacer. Felix (483–492) is the first pope to serve under the Gothic kings. The relationship between

⁴⁰ *LP* Leo, ch. 1, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis* 1, 238.

⁴¹ *ILCV* 1, 343, no. 1765. See B. Neil, "On True Humility: An Anonymous Letter on Poverty and the Female Ascetic", *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 4: The Spiritual Life*, eds W. Mayer, P. Allen and L. Cross (Strathfield 2006: 233–246), 245, n. 56.

⁴² *Archivis fateor volui nova condere tecta / addere praeterea dextra laevaue columnas / quae Damasi teneant proprium per saecula nomen.* (*ILCV* 1, 181: no. 970, lines 5–7).

⁴³ Inscriptions record Marinianus' contribution to the restoring of St Peter's as well as those of his wife Anastasia and son Rufius Viventius Gallus "all in association with the pope": N.W. James, *Pope Leo the Great, the city of Rome and the Western Churches*, unpub. PhD Diss. (Oxford 1984), 280, n. 3, citing J. Matthews, "The Rufii Festii of Volsinii. Continuity in a Roman Family", *Historia* 16 (1967) 484–509.

⁴⁴ Cf. *LP* Damasus, ch. 2, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 212: *Et in Catacumbas, ubi iacuerunt corpora sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, in quo loco platomam ipsam, ubi iacuerunt corpora sancta, versibus exornavit*: "At the Catacombs, the place where lay the bodies of the apostles St Peter and St Paul, he <dedicated and> adorned with verses the actual tablet at the place where the holy bodies lay" (trans. Davis, *LP* 1, 30).

⁴⁵ Sextus Petronius Probus had a mausoleum built for the Anicii family beside the basilica of St Peter, as witnessed by tomb inscriptions to him and his wife: *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 6 (Berlin 1893), 389: no. 1756a and b.

bishops of Rome and the Gothic kings is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to note that Felix is identified as bishop of Rome in the time of King Odoacer to King Theoderic,⁴⁶ thus firmly situating him in relation to his new rulers.

II. Famine relief

Famine relief was also an important part of public evergetism, and an area which had traditionally been the province of the emperor through the *annona* or corn dole. In Rome as in other major cities, the supply of grain and other basic commodities such as pork and oil was assured by the imperial government, but these handouts were available strictly to citizens only, and not just poor citizens either.⁴⁷ Home ownership was a criterion for the *annona* until at least 396.⁴⁸ Constantine the Great issued two edicts (*CTh* 11.27.1–2) concerning provision for the children of the poor, instructing imperial officers in Italy and in Africa to provide for them in an effort to limit infanticide of new-borns and the selling of children into slavery.⁴⁹ In the first case, imperial officers were to seek out such infants at risk; in the second, they were to help those parents who approached them for aid. In the food crisis of 383 or 384 the *praefectus urbis Romae* had been forced to expel all *peregrini*, or foreigners, from Rome to ease the pressure on scanty public resources. Ambrose of Milan sought to expose the humanity of these outcasts and the inhumanity of their banishers, by comparing their actions with those of the prefect of the city in an earlier food crisis in the capital in terms of both honour and public benefit⁵⁰

The first case was so much better as an illustration of behaviour that is both honourable and beneficial. For what could be more seemly or more honourable than this? People who had been in need were helped with the aid of a public subscription, which raised funds from those who were wealthy; people who had been going hungry were provided with sustenance; and there was no lack of food for anyone. And what could be more beneficial? Skilled workers were kept, men who could cultivate the land properly, and the people who had a proper grasp of country ways did not die off.

Bishops of Rome probably stepped in on some occasions in the fifth century to supply the *annona* when imperial food supplies ran short. By the sixth century total control of the *annona* had passed to the bishops of Rome, who also used the produce of their estates to

⁴⁶ *LP* Felix, ch. 1, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 252: *Hic fuit temporibus Odoacris regis usque ad tempora Theodorici regis.*

⁴⁷ G. Woolf, "Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy", *PBSR* 58 (1990), 197–228, has demonstrated from first and second century epigraphy the paucity of evidence linking the *alimenta* schemes with rural or urban poverty in Italy. These schemes were "long dead" by 395 CE (*ibid.*, 204) but their closest parallel was with the corn dole to the city of Rome, whose recipients were selected "more or less at random from the citizen body as a whole" (*ibid.* 205).

⁴⁸ *CTh* 14.17.13, ed. T. Mommsen, 1, 796.

⁴⁹ These were the edicts *de Alimentis quae inopes parentes de publico petere debent*. See Woolf, "Food, Poverty", 204–205, and S. Holman, *The Hungry are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, Oxford 2001), 56.

⁵⁰ *Quam vero illud superius honestum atque utile! Quid enim tam decorum atque honestum quam collatione locupletum iuvari egentes, ministrare victum esurientibus, nulli cibum defore? Quid tam utile quam cultores agro reservari, non interire plebem rusticorum?* Ambrose, *De officiis* 3.51, ed. I. Davidson (Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford 2001), 386–387.

provide for the poor.⁵¹ Some of the papal estates had been lost in the Vandal raids on Sicily in 440–442,⁵² and the invasion of North Africa, whose supplies were cut off after 439. Pope Gelasius (492–496) is also said to have delivered the city of Rome from danger of famine.⁵³ This claim points to the independent wealth held in reserve by the bishop of Rome for such emergencies occasioned by the failure of imperial resources. By way of contrast we note that Theodoret of Cyrrhus, church historian and bishop, records that the eastern Emperor Valens contributed imperial estates to aid Basil of Caesarea's activities on behalf of the poor in Cappadocia, and particularly famine relief, in the latter half of the fourth century.⁵⁴

III. Raising tribute

There is no indication in the sources that Sixtus was called upon to raise tribute. Leo on the other hand negotiated a famous truce with Attila in 452 through an exchange of gold which he apparently had to raise himself. It is worth remembering, however, that the decision to send this delegation in 452 was made by the *princeps*, i.e., Emperor Valentinian, and the Senate and Roman people.⁵⁵ The exact figures of the tribute are not recorded, but may be comparable with the annual tribute payable under the terms of the treaty concluded with the Hun in 447 after the invasion of the Chersonese and Thermopylae.⁵⁶ In early 408 the *magister utriusque militiae* Stilicho had offered Alaric the sum of 4000 pounds of gold, a promise he did not live to deliver.⁵⁷ The settlement that was later reached between Olympius, acting for Emperor Honorius, and Alaric, included 5000 pounds of gold, "and large quantities of silver, silk, skins, pepper, and hostages".⁵⁸ This deal was also never

⁵¹ See M. Humphries, "Italy, A.D. 425–605", in A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, and M. Whitby (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History 14: Late Antiquity Empire and Successors A.D. 425–600* (Cambridge 2000: 525–551), 542. The poor do not make a showing in *LP* until the pontificate of Gelasius, at the end of the fifth century. Gelasius was described as "a lover of <the clergy and> the poor", again with the poor coming second after the clergy, whose number he increased: *LP* Gelasius, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 255: *Hic fuit amator <cleri et> pauperum et clerum ampliavit*.

⁵² Paschasius of Lilybaeum to Leo I, *ep.* 3, *PL* 54, 606–607; D. Moreau, "Les patrimoines de l'église romaine jusqu'à la mort de Grégoire le Grand," in J.-P. Caillet and J.-M. Carrié (eds), *Économie et Religion dans l'Antiquité Tardive, Antiquité Tardive* 14 (Turnhout 2006), 79–93 at 80–84 surveys the evidence on papal properties up to the accession of Gelasius I, noting (87) that, during the early years of Justinian's wars of reconquest, the legislation favourable to the traditional policy of the inalienability of ecclesiastical property, that was commended by Roman bishops since Leo the Great, held firm. This situation changed in 541 when the Goths took back control of part of Italy.

⁵³ *LP* Gelasius, ch. 2, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 255: *Hic liberavit a periculo famis civitatem Romanam*.

⁵⁴ Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.19.13, eds L. Parmentier and G.C. Hansen (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller n.s. 5, Berlin 1998), 245. For a comprehensive study of Basil's activities in the sphere of famine relief, see Holman, *The Hungry are Dying*, and *eadem*, "The Hungry Body: Food, Poverty, and Identity in Basil's *Hom.* 8", *J ECS* 7.3 (1999), 337–363.

⁵⁵ Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma Chronicon edita primum a. CCCXXXIII continuata ad A. CCCCLV*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH AA*: 9, *Chronicorum minorum saec. IV–VII*, vol. 1 (Berlin 1961), 482, 1367, a. 452: *...nihilque inter omnia principis ac senatus populi que Romani salubrius quam ut per legatos pax truculentissimi regis expeteretur*.

⁵⁶ As B. Croke, "Anatolius and Nomus: Envoys to Attila", *BSI* 42/2 (1981: 159–170), 163 concludes: "...the 6,000 pounds of gold should be taken as a contribution to compensate for outstanding φόρον και φονιάδες [tribute and refugees], rather than an arbitrarily computed penalty."

⁵⁷ Zosimus, *Historia nova* 5.29.9; ed. and trans. F. Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle*, 3/1: *Livre V* (Collection des Universités de France, Paris 2003), 44.

⁵⁸ Zosimus, *Historia nova* 5.41.4–42.2, trans. Paschoud, 3/1, 61–63. See Dunn, "The Care of the Poor in Rome", 322.

implemented. Strangely, *LP* only mentions Leo's diplomatic role in heading the embassy to meet Attila outside Rome as occurring "after the Vandal disaster" (*post cladem Wandalicam*),⁵⁹ by which we understand the invasion of Gaiseric in May 455. *LP* describes this meeting thus: "For the sake of the Roman name he undertook an embassy and traveled to the king of the Huns, Attila by name, and he delivered the whole of Italy from the peril of the enemy."⁶⁰ It is interesting that this action is represented as undertaken "for the sake of the Roman name" as a matter of civic pride, and not primarily out of concern for the welfare of the city's inhabitants. Prosper's version of events in the *Chronicon* has a less civic flavour, with Leo turning to God for help.⁶¹

IV. Ransoming prisoners

A civic responsibility closely related to raising tribute was the ransoming of prisoners taken captive in barbarian raids on Rome. How was this funded by bishops? Ambrose had defended himself from criticism for selling church plate to ransom prisoners (*De off.* 2.28). Cyril of Jerusalem had done the same in the mid-fourth century, selling church plate and silk hangings to feed the poor. Of course, we cannot be sure that the selling of church property to ransom prisoners did not occur also in Rome, but if it did, it is certainly not mentioned in *LP*. According to Prosper's *Chronicon* during the siege of Gaiseric "many thousands" of prisoners were taken from Rome, chosen for their age and their skills.⁶² Leo makes occasional general mention of ransoming prisoners in his homilies (for example, *Serm.* 78.4) but *LP* Leo is silent on the subject. Like his contemporary Pope Symmachus, the Gallic bishop Caesarius of Arles is another who took very seriously his duty to ransom captives, both Roman citizens of his own diocese and beyond, even extending his generosity to those captured from northern Italy. This activity was portrayed in his *Vita* and his sermons as both a civic and charitable work. Of this combination of roles in the careers of bishops such as Caesarius of Arles, Garnsey and Woolf observe⁶³

⁵⁹ *LP* Leo, ch. 6, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 239.

⁶⁰ *LP* Leo, ch. 7, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 1, 239: *Hic propter nomen Romanum suscipiens legationem ambulavit ad regem Unnorum, nomine Atthela, et liberavit totam Italiam a periculo hostium.*

⁶¹ Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1367, a. 452: *Suscepit hoc negotium cum viro consulari Avieno et viro praefectorio Trygetio beatissimus papa Leo auxilio dei fretus, quem sciret numquam piorum laboribus defuisse. Nec aliud secutum est quam praesumpserat fides. Nam tota legatione dignanter accepta ita summi sacerdotis praesentia rex gavisus est, ut et bello abstinere praeciperet et ultra Danuvium promissa pace discederet* (ed. T. Mommsen, 482): "And the most blessed pope Leo undertook this affair, together with the consul Avienus and the prefect Trygetius, relying on the help of God, for he knew God never failed the efforts of the righteous. He secured nothing other than what his faith had led him to anticipate. For when the whole legation was fittingly received, the king was so delighted with the presence of the highest priest that he both undertook to refrain from war and he withdrew beyond the Danube after promising peace" (my translation).

⁶² Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1375, a. 455: *Post hunc Maximi exitum confestim secuta est multis digna lacrimis Romana captivitas et urbem omni praesidio vacuam Gisiricus optinuit, occurrente sibi extra portas sancto Leone episcopo, cuius supplicatio ita eum deo agente lenivit, ut, cum omnia potestati ipsius essent tradita, ab igni tamen et caede atque suppliciis abstinere. Per quattuordecim igitur dies secure et libera scrutatione omnibus opibus suis Roma vacuata est multaque milia captivorum, prout quique aut aetate aut arte placuerunt, cum regina et filiabus eius Cartaginem abducta sunt* (ed. T. Mommsen, 484).

⁶³ P. Garnsey and G. Woolf, "Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World", in A. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London 1989: 153–170), 166. I am grateful to Dr Silke Sitzler for drawing my attention to this article. Garnsey and Woolf cite the important contribution of

[Caesarius] devoted a great deal of energy to ransoming prisoners of war, so increasing his own clientele and standing in the community. But his sermons set this activity firmly within the ideological framework of Christian charity. There is a distinction to be made between the ideological element of patronage and the exchanges of goods to which it gives social meaning. Caesarius was able to exploit a single activity, which had meaning in two complementary ideologies, and so to act simultaneously as a patron and out of charitable motives.

Conclusion

LP presents us with popes as political leaders, defenders of doctrine and material providers for their churches. Its bishops do not display poverty or humility. The virtues of the bishop of Rome, unlike those of other earlier Western bishops (such as Cyprian in Pontius' *Life*, and Augustine in Possidius' *Life*)⁶⁴ are presented squarely according to civic, not monastic, ideals. *LP* owes more of its rhetorical character to imperial *res gestae* than it does to hagiography. After the pontificate of Sixtus, *LP* presented its readers with popes who acted, not in agreement with, but in place of, the western emperor.⁶⁵ As the locus of imperial power moved away from Rome towards Ravenna and the East, bishops of Rome increasingly acted on behalf of the emperor in regard to civic activities such as building programmes, famine relief, raising tribute and ransoming captives. It is clear from *LP*, and confirmed by the archeological record, that ideas of what was proper to the sphere of influence for a major urban bishop were under radical review in the mid-fifth century, and the bishops of Rome led the way, along with others such as Caesarius of Arles, in constructing a new western model of the bishop as the primary evergetist in his city. Without a continuous imperial presence in Rome from 457, with from the brief exception of Anthemius (467–472),⁶⁶ the emperor could no longer claim to be the protector of the city: this role fell naturally to its bishops, as in other western cities. Private imperial responsibilities such as building and restoring churches increasingly fell to bishops as well as to Rome's leading aristocratic families. As well, civic responsibilities such as ransoming prisoners of war, raising tribute for barbarian invaders and feeding the hungry masses became primarily episcopal concerns. This occurred both for reasons of expediency – the

Klingshirn in this connection: W. Klingshirn, "Charity and Power: Caesarius of Arles and the ransoming of captives in Sub-Roman Gaul", *JRS* 75 (1985), 183–203. See also the foundational article of P. Allen and W. Mayer, "Through a Bishop's Eyes: towards a Definition of Pastoral Care in Late Antiquity", *Augustinianum* 40 (2000), 345–397, and the literature there cited.

⁶⁴ On the bishop's *Life*, especially Possidius' *Life of Augustine*, as drawing from ascetical hagiography and Hellenistic lives of philosophers, see E. Elm, *Die Macht der Weisheit: Das Bild des Bischofs in der Vita Augustini des Possidius und anderen spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Bischofsviten* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, Brill 2003), 16–63. On the *Vita et Passio Cypriani* of Pontius, see Elm, *ibid.*, 65–78.

⁶⁵ M. Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great", in K. Cooper and J. Hillner (eds), *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900* (Cambridge 2007: 21–58), 54, makes the point that approval of the Byzantine emperors was sought and given for papal constructions in at least two cases in the seventh century.

⁶⁶ This has often been overlooked, as Gillett reminds us, "Rome, Ravenna", 152.

bishops of Rome unlike the western emperors were always there,⁶⁷ and the bishop was one of few individuals who could raise sufficient funds for such purposes – and because the ideological agenda had changed. By the mid-fifth century the emperor was no longer “a towering example of old-fashioned euergetism”.⁶⁸ By the beginning of the sixth, the bishop of Rome was undertaking a broad range of evergetical activities. Pope Symmachus (498–514), for instance, ransomed prisoners in provinces throughout Italy, gave exiled bishops in Africa and Sardinia money and clothing, built accommodation for the poor in Rome, placed a fountain and a public convenience outside St Peter’s, renovated many of the city’s cemeteries, and built public baths for the majority who could not afford private baths and the oil required to heat them.⁶⁹ Where such papal public works are mentioned, they are presented as acts of civic evergetism, helping the city as well as helping the poor.⁷⁰ Evergetism as practised by emperors, bishops, and leading citizens was no longer seen simply as a civic act, although it remained that: it now had charitable dimensions as well. By the end of Leo the Great’s pontificate, the bishop had replaced the emperor as the primary benefactor of the city of Rome.

⁶⁷ Innocent I’s departure to Ravenna during the siege of Alaric, ostensibly to seek help for the distressed people from the absent emperor Honorius, was a notable exception.

⁶⁸ As Brown maintained in my original citation: see n. 1 above.

⁶⁹ *LP* Symmachus, chs 7-8, and ch. 11, ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 262-263. Ch. 11 refers to Symmachus’ improvement of the cemetery of the Jordani. Even the anti-Symmachan author of the *Laurentian Fragment*, Symmachus, ch. 15, trans. Davis, *LP* 1, 105, Appendix 2, acknowledges Symmachus’ renovation of many cemeteries, especially that of St Pancras.

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that Symmachus also accepted aid from prominent lay persons, such as the aristocrat Palatinus. The *Laurentian Fragment* records: “[Symmachus] built and decorated the church of St Martin close to St Silvester’s with the money of the illustrious Palatinus and at that person’s plea he dedicated it” (Davis, *LP* 1, *ibid.*).

Andrew Gillett

**Ethnography and Imperium in the Sixth Century:
Frankish and Byzantine Rhetoric in the *Epistolae Austrasicae***

The *imperium* of Byzantium is famous for the role of “high” culture in the service of its aims. The sixth-century reign of Justinian, most obviously, employed cultural monumentalism as an assertion of imperial vitality, manifest physically in Hagia Sophia and institutionally in the *Corpus iuris civilis*. But less colossal cultural resources also supported the imperial ideology of sixth-century Constantinople. One such resource was classical ethnography, a framework of interpreting events and relationships in terms of supposed inherent properties of distinct human groups. In the wake of the fragmentation of the western half of the Roman Empire in the preceding century, and the political success of several former western provinces as autonomous kingdoms, ethnographic conventions of alien “barbarians” as antagonists to Hellenistic civilization provided a means of understanding and explaining geo-political change that was readily understandable if largely unrealistic. These ethnographic conventions of thought so dominate sources for the period that they have replicated themselves systemically into modern historiography. Justinian’s wars in Mesopotamia, North Africa, and Italy remain his “Persian,” “Vandal,” and “Gothic” wars – the cultural resource of ethnography providing an implicit justification for Byzantine wars against ethnically-defined “oriental” and “barbarian” invaders.

The artificiality of this world-view becomes apparent when Byzantine and western world-views can be compared. A rare if limited opportunity to do so is offered by several sets of diplomatic correspondence from the late sixth century between the emperor in Constantinople and rulers of one former Roman province, Gaul, now ruled by the Frankish dynasty of the Merovingians. The correspondence is preserved in a single Carolingian manuscript and generally known as the *Epistolae Austrasicae*. The letters concern the intermittent military alliance that existed for most of the sixth century between Frankish Gaul and Constantinople, now aimed at supporting Byzantine military campaigns against the Lombard kingdom in Italy. The royal Frankish correspondents, members of the Merovingian dynasty that had controlled Gaul for almost a century, were far from being aliens to the Hellenistic-Christian Mediterranean world. Protectors of the Church, guardians of aristocratic land tenure, and defenders of centuries-old frontiers between the Empire and “barbarian” lands, the Merovingian dynasts were engaged participants in the politics and culture of the post-imperial “commonwealth” (to borrow Garth Fowden’s phrase¹), as indeed were their peers, the Gothic rulers of Spain. Nonetheless, Byzantine imperial rhetoric frequently cast late antique Gaul and the other western states in alienating terms drawn from classical ethnographic concepts – an ideological tactic used, when convenient, to transform these engaged participants into “barbarian” strangers.² Western sources reveal

¹ G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993). Fowden’s description of Byzantine and Islamic regions as “commonwealths” does not extend to the former Roman West, but the concept in fact well describes the status of the cultural and political bloc.

² For example, Agathias’ description of the Franks in Gaul, emphasising their surprising level of Roman culture – a strikingly self-deconstructing statement; Agathias, *Hist.* I.2.

a quite different perspective, in which the states established in the fifth century are very much part of the cultural continuum we associate with the late Roman Empire. The preservation of two sides of a diplomatic correspondence (albeit in unequal proportions) shows the active interplay of these divergent perspectives of ideology and propaganda. The language of the royal Merovingian letters is inclusive, to the point of contortion, and presumes common interests between the two “parts” of the late Roman world; the rhetoric of Roman imperial concord and universality underlies these letters. The imperial letters, while cultivating strategic support from Gaul, maintain ethnographically-based ideological barriers between the Empire and its Frankish ally, which is only partially distinguished from the demonised enemy, the Lombards. In these diplomatic exchanges, the rhetoric of two discourses, concord and ethnography, joust tactfully for pre-eminence as the defining terms of discussion.

“Culture” can be analysed both in its broad sense, of axiomatic beliefs and practices that arise from and in turn reinforce a received world-view (whether philosophical *Weltanschauung* or social *Habitus*), and in its refined literary and visual usage, of learnt discourses of cultural production that shape meaning within the parameters of longstanding traditions. Classical ethnography operated at both the broad and refined levels. Ethnography (a modern neologism, not a contemporary category) conceived of human behaviour as determined by inherent properties of taxonomically different groups, *ethnē* in Greek and *gentes* in Latin, best rendered as “peoples” in English. This foundational world-view enjoyed a superstructure of Greco-Roman formal conventions of literary and visual art stretching back to the beginnings of classical antiquity; its literary and visual conventions received their defining forms in Herodotus’ *Histories* and the Attalid statuary of Pergamon. Ethnographic thought provided an explanation of the behaviour of groups based on assumed inherent properties, whether understood as the products of climatic, social-evolutionary, or other factors; it also provided a template for a Helleno-centric and Romano-centric world-view, dividing the world into “us” and “the barbarians.” Byzantium inherited and cultivated this world view.³

The political and military elites of sixth-century Constantinople were clearly much preoccupied by dealings with “barbarian” peoples: Procopius describes his eight volumes on the *Wars* of Justinian as “the history of the wars which Justinian, emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and of the West,” and Agathias announced his continuation as an account of “deeds among the Romans and the greater part of the barbarians,” both Herodotean echoes.⁴ Nonetheless, modern scholarship tends not to regard Byzantium in the time of Justinian and his successors as a significant stage in the development of classical ethnographic thought, certainly not in comparison with Periclean Athens, Attalid Pergamon, or early imperial Rome. Justinianic authors are conventionally mined as recorders, not shapers, of information about “barbarians.”⁵ In fact, sixth-century

³ R. Browning, “Greeks and Others: From Antiquity to the Renaissance,” in *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Northampton 1989) Chapter 2, repr. in *Greeks and Barbarians*, ed. T. Harrison (Edinburgh 2002), 257–277; *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. D.C. Smythe, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 8 (Aldershot 2000) especially the papers by L. Simeonova and P. Stephenson.

⁴ Procopius, *Wars* 1.1.1; Agathias, *Hist. Proem.* 20; cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.1.

⁵ See for example W. Pohl, “Justinian and the Barbarian Kingdoms”, in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 448–476, in which sixth-century evidence is discussed as sources for pseudo-“barbarian” (here, meaning exclusively “Germanic”) traditions. For a corrective view, albeit addressing a slightly earlier period, see the corresponding article by M. Kulikowski, “Constantine and the Northern Barbarians”, in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge 2006), 347–376. On classical

Constantinople contributed two of the most important developments of classical ethnographic thought, important because of their huge influence on modern European self-understandings: the interpretation of the fragmentation of the western half of the Roman empire in the fifth and sixth centuries as the victory, in both military and cultural terms, of foreign, “barbarian” *ethnē* over a collapsed Roman state (terminated definitively in 476); and the conception that these barbarians entered the Greco-Roman world as outsiders, the products of epic migrations covering vast stretches of space and time.⁶ Ethnic difference is the explanatory model for collapse, operating through demographic movement. As representations of how the Roman West unravelled, and of the role of frontier groups that had in fact long been incorporated into the “globalised” military-economic system of the Roman Empire, these explanatory models of collapse and migration are less closely related to fifth-century realities than to earlier Greco-Roman ethnographical texts, from which the concepts were derived and refined into their distinctively Constantinopolitan expression.⁷ Both concepts are developed most fully in the *Getica* of Jordanes, an intriguing mix of panegyric and polemic deploying an ethnographic model; they also play important roles in Procopius’ deeply inaccurate presentation of fifth-century western events. This significant leap of classical ethnographic thought from template for description to explanatory model, and its Byzantine provenance, have tended to be obscured from view by the appropriation of these models into European historical and especially nationalist thought, which has on the one hand comfortably accepted the “Fall of Rome” as a demarcation, however regrettable, between western European history and both ancient and Oriental societies, while on the other hand seeing the invading “barbarians” as forebears, however rude, of distinctly European cultures, whose distant provenances further ensured the discrete origins of the West.

Ethnographic thought could drive rhetorical and political agenda without necessarily being formulated into conventional expressions of “ethnographic” literary or visual genres. “Set piece” ethnographic accounts – “digressions” such as Books Two and Four of Herodotus on the Egyptians and Scythians, Ammianus Marcellinus’ concluding book on the Huns, and the few extant ethnographic monographs including Tacitus’ *Germania* and Jordanes’ *Getica* – loom large in modern understandings of classical ethnography. The habits of thought behind these formal works, however, had a quotidian currency that is revealed by an array of sources in which ethnographic conventions are deployed more or less casually as proofs to support other agenda.⁸

ethnography, see now B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton 2004); G. L. Campbell, *Strange Creatures: Anthropology in Antiquity* (London 2006); for the formative period of ancient Athens, see the overview of P. Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*, 2nd edn. (Oxford 2002), 51–77; for Rome: E. Dench, *From Barbarians to New Men: Greek, Roman, and Modern Perceptions of People of the Central Apennines* (Oxford 1995), 29–108.

⁶ For the Constantinopolitan provenance of this view of the post-imperial West: W. Goffart, “Jordanes’ *Getica* and the Disputed Authenticity of Gothic Origins from Scandinavia”, *Speculum* 80 (2005), 379–398; *idem*, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia 2006), 56–72.

⁷ For corrective views: C.R. Whitaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore 1994), esp. 98–131; *ibid*, *Rome and Its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London 2004), 50–62, 199–218; W. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia 2006), 23–39.

⁸ J. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago 2002) 175–178, 211–219; A. Gillett, “The Mirror of Jordanes: Concepts of the ‘Barbarian’, Then and Now”, in Philip Rousseau (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2009), 392–408.

The diplomatic exchanges preserved in the *Epistolae Austrasicae* are an example of just such a subsidiary deployment of ethnographic thought. The collection is a gathering of forty-eight letters written in the north-east of Gaul in the century between the 480s and 590s, preserved in a unique ninth-century Carolingian syllogue, copied from an original probably made at the end of the sixth century.⁹ By the late sixth century, north-east Gaul formed one of several distinctive sub-kingdoms within the broader Frankish state, each ruled by collateral lines of the Merovingian dynasty of Clovis; the term “Austrasia” begins to be attested for the north-eastern region at about the time of the last letters in the collection. The first half of the collection includes mostly letters from Gallic bishops, though there are also three letters from the Merovingian kings Theodebert I (533–547) and Theodobald (547–555) (*Ep. Austr.* 18–20). The second half of the collection (*Ep. Austr.* 25–48), with which this paper will primarily be concerned, contains exclusively letters written in the 580s/590s between the royal court of Austrasia under the boy-king Childebert II (575–595/96), the imperial court of Maurice (582–602), and other senior Byzantine officials and notables, in particular the exarch of Italy. These twenty-four letters appear to have been copied from an Austrasian court archive, judging by abbreviations and explanatory annotations in the transmitted text. They represent about half of the few extant letters between western kings and east Roman imperial authorities,¹⁰ and are the only instance of communication between the former parts of the Roman empire in which letters from both parties, eastern and western, are preserved (though, in fact, we cannot be sure that the letters in the collection include actual replies to each other; they are clearly only selections from a much busier set of correspondences).

The letters were generated by the military situation in Italy. Following the Lombard occupation of large parts of the Italian peninsula and the establishment of the Lombard royal court at Pavia in the north-west, Constantinople sought auxiliary military aid from the Frankish rulers of Gaul, just as Justinian’s generals had during the earlier war against the Goths. (Negotiations were not straightforward, and were complicated by Byzantine kidnappings, Frankish failure to render agreed services after taking payments, and double-dealing with the Lombards by both sides). The letters in *Ep. Austr.* 25–48 were prepared for envoys dispatched to negotiate the Frankish-Byzantine military alliance. As sources for the complex politics of these affairs, the letters can be contextualised, with reservations, by the selective narrative of the contemporary Gallic bishop and historian Gregory of Tours and several other sources.¹¹ The texts are short letters of credence for envoys dispatched from

⁹ The edition by E. Malaspina (ed), *Il Liber epistolarum della cancelleria austrasica (sec. V–VI)* (Rome 2001) supplants the former standard edition of W. Gundlach, *Epistolae Austrasicae* (MGH *Epistolae* III), 110–153, repr. with amendments by F. Rommel in CCSL 117, 407–470. For the collection and its provenance: W. Gundlach, “Die Sammlung der *Epistolae Austrasicae*”, *Neues Archiv* 13 (1888) 367–387; Malaspina (ed.), *Il Liber epistolarum*, 5–39.

¹⁰ Other examples include letters of the Gothic kings of Italy to Constantinople preserved in Cassiodorus, *Variae* I.1, 46, II.1, 41, III.1–4, IV.1–2, V.1–2, 43–44, VIII.1, IX.1, X.1–2, 8–10, 15, 19–26, 32–35, CCSL: 96, ed. Å.J. Fridh (Turnhout 1973), on which see A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533* (Cambridge 2003), 174–190; and letters of the Burgundian kings of eastern Gaul preserved in Avitus of Vienne, *Epistolae* 78, 93, 94, MGH *AA*: 6.2, ed. R. Peiper (Berlin 1883).

¹¹ Gregory of Tours (Greg. Tur.), *Hist.* V.38, VI.40, 42, 43, VIII.18, 28, IX.25, X.2–3. Other western sources: John of Biclaro, *Chron.* 54, 64–65, 68, 73; Fredegar, *Chron.* IV.45; *Copen. Cont. Prosper* 1532; Paul the Deacon (Paul. Diac.), *Hist. Lang.* III. 16–18, 22, 28–29, 31, 34, 35. Eastern sources: Menander Protector, *Hist. fr.* 22, 24, Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 6080. Modern studies: P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l’Islam II 1: Byzance et les Francs* (Paris 1956); W. Goffart, “Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice”, *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118; E. Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das*

one court to the other. In some cases they cover draft treaty documents (that are not preserved), but more generally the letters are only short overtures to the issues to be negotiated *viva voce*. The bulk of the letters – twenty-one of the twenty-four – are from the Austrasian Frankish court; most are written in the name of Childebert, but five are in the name of his mother, the dowager queen Brunhild. There are only three Byzantine letters, one from Maurice and two from the exarch of Italy, written in close succession. The Austrasian letters, however, represent the documents of only three or perhaps four separate embassies.¹² Packets of letters to multiple recipients at Constantinople were prepared for the envoys; so for example, the fifteen letters of *Ep. Austr.* 25–39, prepared for a single embassy, include four letters to Maurice and his *augustae*, two to a member of the Merovingian dynasty at the imperial court, and the remaining nine to various Byzantine officials and notables. Letters prepared for a single embassy are highly repetitive in their themes and conceits. So, although Austrasian letters outnumber Byzantine ones twenty-one to three, in fact we can compare the rhetorical ploys prepared for a more equitable number of separate embassies: three or four Gallic embassies and three Byzantine ones.

Epithets

Perhaps the most striking example of ethnographic constructs in *Ep. Austr.* is the use in the imperial letters of standardised epithets for “barbarian peoples,” a convention arising from both the conceptual framework of Hellenistic-Roman ethnography and its textual traditions. Hellenistic ethnographic thought attributed complexes of physical and moral characteristics to individual peoples that distinguished them from other groups and established their place on a conceptual hierarchy; the *loci classici* are Herodotus’ extended investigation of Scythian and Egyptian qualities in relation to those of Hellenes, and Tacitus’ moralising assessment of the Germani. But the literary tradition also developed a more summary convention of labelling peoples for rhetorical purposes. In Greek and Latin poetry, lists of barbarian peoples were a commonplace lapidary flourish (perhaps descended stylistically from Homer’s catalogue of the Trojan forces).¹³ An extension of this, evidenced in the Roman imperial and late antique periods, was the association of particular physical or moral qualities with specific peoples, “barbarian” and non-barbarian, as a rhetorical trope; individual peoples could be cited as exemplars of those qualities. The diversity of these putative inherent qualities was sometimes used in more elaborate ways as a basis for philosophical and theological argumentation (for example, by both the emperor Julian and Salvian of Marseilles¹⁴). A small sub-genre of late antique and early medieval texts, some headed *The Qualities of Peoples*, presents what appear to be reference lists of ethnonyms, standing historical and Biblical peoples alongside apparently contemporary names. In these lists, the “qualities” of peoples are reduced to a series of one-word epithets; sometimes both positive and negative attributes are provided for each people. In several cases, though not all, the epithets and “ethnic” names in these lists alliterate: “the perfidy of the Persians,”

Imperium (Opladen 1983), 36–48; C. Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* (London 1981), 30–33.

¹² The separate Austrasian embassies are: *Ep. Austr.* 25–39 (late 585–590/mid 593), 43–45 and 47 (in or soon after 585), 46 (also in or soon after 585, and possibly part of the preceding embassy), 48 (in or before 581). The Byzantine embassies are: *Ep. Austr.* 40 (589–September 590), 41 (shortly after the preceding), 42 (?584–595/96).

¹³ For example, Statius, *Achil.* 2.133; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 23.241–262, cf. *Ep.* 1. 2. 6; Dracontius, *Romulea* 5, *Proem.* 33–37.

¹⁴ Julian, *Contra Gal.* 115 D–131 D, 138 B; Salvian, *De Gub.* 4.14.67.

“the savagery of the Saracens,” “the gluttony of the Gauls.”¹⁵ Possibly these lists served as reference works for rhetorical exercises and literary composition, such as in Sidonius Apollinaris’ description of a royal court: “you can find there Greek elegance, Gallic plenty, Italian briskness.”¹⁶ If that is the purpose of these lists, they are an index of the frequency with which such imagery was deployed.

Two of the Byzantine letters preserved in *Ep. Austr.* employ such epithets for both the Lombard enemies and the Frankish allies of imperial interests in Italy. *Ep. Austr.* 40 and 41 were written in 589/90 by the Byzantine exarch of Italy (probably Romanus, exarch 589/90–595/97¹⁷). Both letters are sent, strikingly, from the battlefield; *Ep. Austr.* 40 includes a genuine example of contemporary war-reportage. The style of these two letters, though preserving the formalities of address conventional to political communiqués of the period, is noticeably less literary and more descriptive than other documents in the collection in their curt accounts of strategy and politics on the Italian battlefield. The imperial army had attempted to capture some of the troops of Lombard dukes in a pincer movement coordinated with Frankish forces sent by king Childebert II, but the Frankish generals had decided to withdraw from conflict before ensuring the final capitulation of the Lombard forces; the exarch chides Childebert for this failure and urges the dispatch of a follow-up expedition.

The letter stigmatises the Lombards repeatedly (three times) as *nefandissimi*, “most nefarious,” and their king Authari also as *nefandissimus*, for example:

[had the Frankish army forced a battle with the Lombards to its conclusion], today Italy would be found free of the most nefarious people of the Lombards, [and] all the possessions of the most nefarious king Authari would have been conferred on Your Excellency... (*Ep. Austr.* 40.9).¹⁸

Nefandissimi is attested as the regular negative epithet of the Lombards in papal letters of Pelagius II and Gregory I in the 580s and 590s;¹⁹ the appearance of the term in the exarch’s letter suggests its derivation from Constantinopolitan war propaganda. Authari, whose

¹⁵ ...*perfidia Persarum...sevitia Sarracenorum...gula Gallorum*. The fullest version includes two lists, entitled “The Weaknesses of Peoples” and “The Good Aspects of Peoples” (*De vitiis gentium, De bonis naturis gentium*); the relevant entries for Lombards and Franks are “the bragging of the Lombards/ the Lombards’ liberality”, “the ferocity of the Franks/ the Franks’ fortitude” (*vana gloria Langobardorum, largitas Langobardorum, ferocitas Francorum, Francorum fortitudino*).

¹⁶ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* I.2.6: *videas ibi elegantiam Graecam abundantiam Gallicanam celeritatem Italiam*; trans. W.B. Anderson, LCL (Cambridge, Mass. 1936).

¹⁷ The exarch’s name is given in the protocol to *Ep. Austr.* 41; the two letters were written by the same correspondent (*Ep. Austr.* 41.2). For the exarch Romanus: *PLRE* III, “Romanus 7”, 1092–1093. The Italian campaign described in the letters could be the Frankish incursions of either 589 or 590 (Greg. Tur. *Hist.* IX 29, X 3; Paul. Diac. *Hist. Lang.* III.31).

The superscript of *Ep. Austr.* 40, which is a scribal or archival heading not the protocol of the original letter (see below), transmits the exarch’s name, Romanus, as *romanorum imperatore*; interestingly, Gregory of Tours also refers to an unnamed exarch of Italy as “the emperor”; Greg. Tur. *Hist.* X.3. Attestations of the term “exarch” commence in this period, but the title is not used by either Greg. Tur. or the correspondents of *Ep. Austr.*

¹⁸ *hodie Italia a gente Langobardorum nefandissima libera habuit repperiri et universa nefandissimii Autharit regis ad vestram excellentiam habuerunt deferri*. Lombards: *Ep. Austr.* 40.5, 9, 10. Authari: *Ep. Austr.* 40.9.

¹⁹ Pelagius II, *Ep.* to bishop Aunarius (MGH *Ep.* III, 449 II.24–25); *idem*, *Ep.* to the deacon Gregory (MGH *Ep.* II, 441 II.8–9 = John the Deacon, *Gregorii magna vita* I 32, *PL* 75 col. 76); Greg. I, *Regist.* I.17 (Authari), V.38, VII.23 (MGH *Ep.* I, 23 I.11; 325 I.1; 468 I.3).

elevation in 584 terminated a ten-year interregnum among the Lombards in Italy that had probably been engineered by imperial influence, had instigated a crisis for Byzantine control of the northern peninsula.²⁰ Like certain other “barbarian” leaders of the fourth to sixth centuries, whose actions had particularly impacted on imperial interests – Alaric, Geiseric, Attila – Authari earned the full opprobrium of imperial censure, often expressed in terms derived from ethnographic stereotypes.²¹ The consistent use of *nefandissimus* for both Authari and the Lombards *en masse* reflects the conventional use of defining ethnic epithets as an element of Constantinopolitan propaganda.

The epithet invokes the religious dimension of this propaganda by characterising the Lombard occupation of parts of Italy as *nefas*, an abomination against divine law, referring presumably to the heretical, “Arian” Christological beliefs attributed to the Lombards. The supposed anti-Nicene “Arianism” of the Lombard population and its monarchy was a politicised construct that simplified actual conditions of confessional complexity among the ruling elite of the Lombards.²² In accord with traditional ethnographic practices, it attributed a single quality to a homogenously-constructed “ethnic” group. Both Austrasian and imperial letters in *Ep. Austr.* 25–48 invoke Nicene solidarity against supposedly persecuting Lombard rulers as the basis for the Byzantine-Frankish alliance.²³ Justinian’s propaganda against the Vandals and Goths had likewise politicised the confessional heterodoxy of the ruling elites in the western kingdoms, adding Christian heresy to ethnographic “barbarian” stereotypes as justification, albeit post-factum, for his western campaigns.²⁴ The consistent use of the epithet *nefandissimus* is a small example of the convention of ethnographic epithets, a “quality” of a barbarian people used as justification for war.

The religious proscription of the Lombards is echoed in the letters of Childebert:

the people of the Lombards, who are treacherous in their religion and in their most injurious faith (*Ep. Austr.* 46.2).²⁵

this cursed people which incites the hand of cruelty with an outpouring of blood, bringing outrage against the saints and death to the Lord’s own faithful (*Ep. Austr.* 46.3).²⁶

²⁰ Paul. Diac. *Hist. Lang.* III.16; John of Biclaro, *Chron.* 58; *Copen. Cont. Prosper* 1532; Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy* 30–33.

²¹ Alaric: depicted as a new Hannibal by the imperial panegyricist Claudian and other writers: M. Dewar, “Hannibal and Alaric in the Later Poems of Claudian”, *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994), 349–372. Geiseric and Attila: cf. the portraits in Jordanes, *Getica* 168, 180–184, 244 as, respectively, the treacherous manipulator and swaggering barbarian (compare Jordanes’ Attila to Priscus’ portrait, *frag.* 13 Blockley).

²² S. Fanning, “Lombard Arianism Reconsidered”, *Speculum* 56 (1981) 241–258.

²³ *Ep. Austr.* 40.1, 10, 43.1–2, 46.2–3, 48.3.

²⁴ Contrast Procopius, *Wars* III.9.6–26, V.4–5 (report of what seems to have been the original justifications for intervention in Vandal north Africa and Gothic Italy: in each case, support for a friendly monarch deposed by dynastic conflict) with Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Sabas* 72, 74 (trans. R.M. Price in Cyril of Scythopolis, *The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* [Kalamazoo 1991] 187–188); and Justinian, *Codex* I.27.1.1–9: defeat of western usurpers in order to root out Arianism in both West and East. P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge 1997), 261.

²⁵ ...gentem Langobardorum religioni ac fidei iniquissimae perfidam.

²⁶ ...gentem execrabilem...quae iniuriae sanctorum et morte suorum [sc. Domini] fidelium, sanguinis effusione crudelitatis manus armavit. A (chronologically) earlier letter alludes to the religious justification of the war, but without ethnographic reference to the Lombards: “we will undertake to avenge the outrages against God as much as the blood of our Roman relatives, as Christ guides us”

Again, as in conventional ethnographic thought, these descriptions map a “quality” – here, a religious offence – onto a homogenised “people”, but here using a stylistic approach different from the exarch’s summary use of a defining epithet.

The Frankish allies of the Empire are also labelled in both letters of the exarch by ethnographic epithets that define their role in the conflict. The *Qualities of Peoples* lists feature positive and negative epithets for *Franci* that alliterate (with both the fricative *f*- and the labial *-r*-): “the ferocity of the Franks/the Franks’ fortitude.”²⁷ The exarch likewise regularly refers to the Frankish army and its actions with alliterative epithets, here all positive:

the most flourishing army of the Franks (*Ep. Austr.* 40.4)
 the army of the most flourishing Franks (*Ep. Austr.* 40.7)
 once the army of the Franks has fortuitously arrived (*Ep. Austr.* 41.6).²⁸

Again, this slight adornment is an invocation of ethnographic convention, recognising the role of the Franks in the conflict primarily as military support (a common function for “barbarian” labour), here characterised in an optimistically auspicious way. It has no echo in the letters of Childebert. The exarch’s letters also address the role of the Franks as co-religionists of the imperial forces, complementing the presentation of the Lombards as impious, but this theme is developed by terms of address applied to king Childebert himself (including the title *Christianissimus*, usually reserved for the emperor) rather than by epithets applied to the Franks as a people.²⁹

The two sets of epithets in the exarch’s battlefield letters – the *nefandissimi* Lombards and *florentissimi* Franks – are casual examples of commonplace ethnographic practices. Derogatory or auspicious, they define relationships between the empire and its western neighbours in terms meaningful to Byzantine policy, and apply just as much to Constantinople’s ally – and addressee of these letters – as to the demonised enemy.

Partes and Regnum

A second dissonance in the dialogue between imperial and Austrasian correspondents concerns the ways by which each side represents the two states and their interrelationship. In the imperial letters – two from the exarch, one from the emperor Maurice (*Ep. Austr.* 40–42) – and in those of Childebert and his court, the eastern imperial state is referred to conventionally as *Romana res publica*, “the Roman republic.”³⁰ But the way in which each side refers to the Frankish state differs significantly. The exarch refers to Childebert’s state as his “kingdom,” *regnum*, and also uses this term as an epithet for the king himself.³¹ Maurice’s letter sets “the people of the Franks” and “your [that is, Childebert’s] people” in

(*temptemus pariter Dei iniuria et sanguine parentibus nostris Romanis, Christo praesule, vindicare*; *Ep. Austr.* 48.3).

²⁷ [*F*]erocitas Francorum...Francorum fortitudo.

²⁸ *Ep. Austr.* 40.4: *florentissimum Francorum exercitum*; 40.7: *Francorum florentissimus exercitus*; 41.6: *dum feliciter Francorum exercitus descenderit*.

²⁹ *Christianissimus*: *Ep. Austr.* 40.3, 8, 10; 41.1 (Childebert); 40.11 (Maurice). Other invocations of Nicene unity: *Ep. Austr.* 40.1, 4; 41.6 (the Franks as a *christiana gens*).

³⁰ Imperial letters: *Ep. Austr.* 40.10; 41.2 *bis*, 3 *bis*; 42.1, 5. Royal letters: *Ep. Austr.* 28.2, 29.1, 30.1, 32.2, 33.2, 34.2, 35.2, 36.2, 37.2, 38.2, 39.2, 45.2, 46.2 *bis*, 47.2, 48.3, 5.

³¹ *Regnum*: *Ep. Austr.* 40.1, 2 *bis*, 10. As epithet: 40.10 *bis*, 41.1.

apposition to the Roman Republic.³² The exarch's term *regnum* draws an ambiguous distinction between the western state and the eastern *res publica*: it could be a neutral observation of Childebert's jurisdiction (as the term *regnum* is used by other contemporary writers) or a more meaningful distinction between royal tyranny and divinely-justified imperial rule.³³ In Maurice's letter, the repeated apposition between not two states but the *res publica* and a "people" makes a more marked conceptual and hierarchal distinction, between a state and an *ethnos*. Both Byzantine terminologies differentiate the western state from the empire.

The language used in the letters from the Austrasian court is quite different. Unlike both the exarch and Maurice, Childebert never names his own state or adopts differentiated terminology to distinguish between the Byzantine and Austrasian polities. Instead his predominant language is inclusive, invoking the mutual interests of the two states, expressed interchangeably as "both our regions / territories / peoples / communities" (*utraeque partes / regiones / gentes / populi*) – territorial and communal terms stressing commonality between Austrasia and the empire.³⁴ The idea of reciprocal, mutual interests is pursued to the point of linguistic contortion:

when both our peoples are joined by the grace of peace, it will bring advantage to our regions which, in the presence of Christ, are jointly bound together by sincere affection (*Ep. Austr.* 30.2).³⁵

may each region embrace the reassurance of the reward (*vicissitudinarium... solacium*), furnished by the Lord, which it has sought for its benefit by its own exertions (*Ep. Austr.* 38.2).³⁶

The most frequently occurring term is *utraeque partes*. The phrase suggests not "parties" in negotiations but joint "parts" of a single body politic.³⁷ It recalls earlier conventions of

³² *Ep. Austr.* 42.2 (*gentis Francorum et dicioni Romanae*), 5 (*vestrae gentis...atque felicissimae nostrae republicae*).

³³ *Regnum* as jurisdiction: e.g. *Ep. Austr.* 6.3, 9.6, 10.5.

³⁴ *Utraeque partes*: see n. 37 below. *Regiones*: *Ep. Austr.* 29.1, 31.2, 38.2. *Utraque gentis*: 29.1, 30.2, 31.2, 32.2, 34.2, 35.2, 36.2, 37.2, 38.2, 39.2, 44.1, 3. *Populi*: 31.2 *bis*.

It is noteworthy that Childebert uses the term *gentes* (equivalent to the Greek *ethnē*) interchangeably with *populi*, *partes*, and *regiones*, for the polities of both Austrasia and the eastern empire. The term *gentes* is valorised in some current Germanist scholarship as a technical term; it is seen to invoke a distinctively non-Roman "ethnic ideology" that is credited with over-riding Hellenistic and imperial ideologies and thereby establishing new "ethnic" communities in the West, i.e., the "barbarian kingdoms" of the fifth-century onwards (for example, H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. T.J. Dunlap [Berkeley 1988], 5–6, 11; *idem*, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. T.J. Dunlap [Berkeley 1988], 8–9: "[the terminology] force[s] us to make such observations like the following: 'a gens is composed of many gentes and is led by a royal gens'"). But here as elsewhere the term reflects its traditional Latin semantic range, rooted in kinship relations but commonly abstracted, as here, to include almost any social grouping; *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* VI 1842–1865 (for the common usage misinterpreted in the Germanist studies mentioned above: II B 1, 1850).

³⁵ ...*utrisque gentibus pacis gratia sociatis proficiat partibus quas pariter sincero praestante Christo nectit affectus*.

³⁶ ...*habeat utraque pars vicissitudinarium de se sibi, Domino subministrante, solacium*.

³⁷ *Utraeque partes*: *Ep. Austr.* 25.1, 28.3, 30.2, 33.2, 36.2, 37.2, 38.2, 46.2, 48.1, 3; also 35.2, 39.2 (*vestris nostrisque partibus*). Malaspina *passim* and 354 s.v. translates each instance in the sense "controparte diplom." but this does not seem to convey the sense of the Latin; some uses of *partes*

referring to eastern and western jurisdictions of the Empire as complementary parts of a whole (both before and after the dissolution of the western imperial throne) – *partes imperii*, *partes Orientis et Occidentis*, *partes Graecia et Italiae* – as well as the phrase *utraeque res publicae* used in the early sixth century by both the Gothic rulers of Italy and the Constantinopolitan court to mark the continued conceptual unity of the Roman state despite the fragmentation of the western provinces.³⁸ The tenor of the Austrasian letters is inclusivist and statist (perhaps, of course, as a rhetorical strategy in dealing with the Empire), whereas that of the imperial letters, even though negotiating an alliance with Childebert, is separatist and ethnological – indeed, separatist because ethnological. The Austrasian court plays on the real historical ties of administration and culture between the eastern empire and its former western provinces to cast its negotiations as aspects of unitary *concordia*; the Constantinopolitan correspondents invoke ethnographic constructs in order to set even the allied Frankish court at a distance and in an inferior hierarchal place.

Ethnic royal title

A third divergence between the imperial and royal letters concerns formal titulature and the “ethnic” royal title *rex Francorum*, “king of the Franks,” applied to Childebert by imperial letters but not used by himself. A caveat, however, must be made about the evidence of *Ep. Austr.* The formal title of the addressee of a late antique letter was contained in its opening protocol. The sole manuscript of *Ep. Austr.*, copied in Carolingian times almost certainly from Austrasian court archival copies of letters dispatched and received, does not preserve the original protocol of all letters. Instead it offers an unsystematic mix of openings, including examples of what are probably complete copies of original protocols alongside what are clearly scribal annotations (for example, *incipits* and *simili prologo*, “an opening like that above”) and cases which seem to mix elements of original protocol with scribal annotations. Even groups of letters that had clearly been prepared as a single dossier to equip a particular embassy display a variety of formats. Some of the scribal annotations were presumably included at or close to the time of composition of the letters (e.g. those recording the names of court officials who actually drafted the letters, or the names of the envoys who undertook the embassies for which the letters were prepared), but others may be Carolingian additions (e.g. glosses of the titles of Constantinopolitan court officials). Interpretation of the genuine protocol of the original letters depends in part on comparanda drawn from diplomatic letters and official documents from other western royal chancelleries.³⁹

The “ethnic” title “king of the Franks” appears in the openings of two of the three Byzantine letters. The letter of Maurice to Childebert, which includes a lengthy full imperial titulature in the same format as that attested for the earlier sixth-century emperors Anastasius, Justinian, and Justin II has the strongest claims to preserving the genuine protocol of an original letter:

are clearly spatial (i.e., *Ep. Austr.* 26.1, 29.1, 31.2, 46.2, 48.3, 5) and throughout the term is used in a segmentary sense, to refer to sections of a whole (in some cases Byzantine and Frankish regions, in others different sections of Byzantine territory, using the same terminology), rather than in an oppositional sense, to distinguish two separate blocs.

³⁸ For example, Augustine, *De civ. Dei* V.26; Cass. *Var.* I.1.4–5, II.1.4, X.32.4, cf. X.21.2; Hormisdas, *Ep.* 12. See J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Utraeque res publicae: The Emperor Anastasius I's Gothic Policy (491–518)* (Poznań 1994), 75–101.

³⁹ Cf. n. 10 above.

In the name of our lord God, Jesus Christ: the Emperor Caesar Flavius Maurice Tiberius – faithful in Christ, mild, majestic, bountiful, peaceable; the conqueror of the Alamanni, Goths, Antes, Alani, Vandals, Heruls, Gepids, and Africans; pious, fortunate, renowned, victor and triumphant, ever augustus – to Childebert, *vir gloriosus*, King of the Franks (*Ep. Austr.* 42 *tit.*).

One of the two letters of the exarch clearly lacks its original protocol (opening instead with an *incipit*); the second may be partly original, but lacks any title for the sender, Romanus, indicating at least incompleteness. It, like Maurice's letter, includes an "ethnic" royal title for Childebert: "To the most excellent and eminent Lord Childebert, King of the Franks: from Romanus" (*Ep. Austr.* 41 *tit.*). Tentatively, the appearance of the "ethnic" royal title *rex Francorum* in *Ep. Austr.* 41 and 42 may be taken as evidence of its inclusion in the original letters prepared by Byzantine chancelleries.

The title *rex Francorum* almost certainly did not stand in the actual protocol of letters sent from the Austrasian court. The standard form of the original protocol for letters from Childebert (and his mother, the dowager queen Brunhild) appears to have been:

To [N plus title and honorifics]: from Childebert, King (*rex*).⁴⁰

This is the form used in ten letters, sent from the Austrasian court between the 530s and 590s, which seem to preserve complete protocols (or at least, show no sign of archival annotation).⁴¹ Amongst the letters that do not preserve original protocol but clearly reflect scribal annotations, the standard form of opening is:

Beginning [of the letter] to [N or title of recipient] in the name of the Lord (*dominus*) [Childebert].⁴²

Five royal Austrasian letters, however, style the king *rex Francorum* in the opening.⁴³ All these letters show signs of scribal annotation. Oddly, the five letters form part of a packet of fifteen prepared for a single embassy (*Ep. Austr.* 25–39), of which the other letters preserve what seems to be original protocol (without an "ethnic" royal title). The change of style in titulature mid-way through the archival versions of a single dossier of correspondence is very unlikely to reflect changes in the style of the original letters; instead, it shows intermittent adoption of Byzantine practice by copyists in Gaul – though whether by the late sixth-century archivist or the Carolingian copyist is unclear.

A wide range of chancery and other sources for the Merovingian monarchies – letters, treaties, decrees, charters, coinage, and dating formulae in inscriptions and Church councils – attest the standard form of Frankish titles as *dominus N rex*, without any "ethnic" title. The same is true for the chancelleries of other western kingdoms in the fifth and sixth centuries.⁴⁴ Literary historical narratives regularly refer to the rulers of the post-imperial

⁴⁰ For example, *Ep. Austr.* 25 *tit.*: "To the glorious lord, pious, perpetual, renowned, triumphant and ever augustus, our father Maurice, Emperor: from Childebert, King" (*Domino glorioso pio inclito triumphatore ac semper augusto patri Mauricio imperatore Childebertus rex*).

⁴¹ *Ep. Austr.* 18–20, 25–29, 31.

⁴² For example, *Ep. Austr.* 47 *tit.*: *Incipit ad imperatore de domno nomine*; cf. the openings of *Ep. Austr.* 43–47, 48.

⁴³ *Ep. Austr.* 32, 34, 37, 38–39.

⁴⁴ Only in the seventh century did the "ethnic" titles of kings and of kingdoms familiar to us from literary convention come into official use by the chancelleries of Frankish Gaul and Lombard Italy, though not uniformly and not at all in Gothic Spain. The reasons are unclear but probably reflect

western states as kings of a specific people (for example, *rex Francorum*), but this is Hellenistic literary convention – indeed, ethnographic convention – not self-description. There is little evidence to support the assumption that monarchs of the period sought to project an ethnic identity, to distinguish themselves either from peers or from a Roman authority, through titulature (or indeed other media).⁴⁵ Though it is curious to modern students to realise this gap between our conceptions of “kings of the Franks” and ancient practice, there is an obvious late antique analogy: the “ethnic” title *rex Persarum*, used regularly in Greek and Roman literary works for the rulers of Sasanian “Persia” but no true reflection of the actual title *Šāhānšāh Ērān ud Anērān*, “lord of the lords of Iran and beyond Iran”. The titulature of the rulers of *Ērānšahr* invoked constitutional and politico-geographic conceptions, not “ethnic” ones.⁴⁶ “Ethnic” royal titles for rulers of foreign peoples are standard and frequent usages in Greco-Roman literary works, but are expressions of Hellenistic ethnographic conceptions of the world, not accurate reportages of the self-conceptions and presentations of other polities.

In short, both Austrasian and Constantinopolitan correspondents use the same imperial title for Maurice – “the glorious lord, pious, perpetual, renowned, triumphant and ever augustus, our father Maurice, Emperor”⁴⁷ – but differ in their uses for the title of Childebart: plain “King Childebart” in original letters of the Austrasian chancellery, “lord [Childebart]” in its archival copies; but “King of the Franks”, an “ethnic” royal title, in letters of Byzantine authors. The two courts agree on the term used for the emperor but diverge over Frankish titulature; this is the same pattern as the terminology for their two states, discussed above. Again, the difference lies in the use of ethnographic terminology at Constantinople.

There is a significant complement to the Constantinopolitan use of an “ethnic” royal title in the letter from Maurice to Childebart: Maurice’s own use of an impressive list of traditional Roman “ethnic” victory titles in the protocol of *Ep. Austr.* 42: “conqueror of the Alamanni, Goths, Antes, Alani, Vandals, Heruls, Gepids, and Africans” (*Alamannicus, Gothicus, Anticus, Alanicus, Wandalicus, Erullicus, Gypedicus, Africus*). Addressing an allied leader by an “ethnic” royal title, while displaying his own qualifications as a conqueror of *ethnē*, Maurice again frames the empire’s relations with its “barbarian” neighbours, quite conventionally, in imperially-centered terms that simultaneously are defined ethnographically and invoke late Roman “victory ideology”.⁴⁸

internalisation of Byzantine practice and the complex politics of these states rather than belated assertions of “ethnic” self-expression. Gillett, “Was Ethnicity Politicized?” (esp. 94–97 for Frankish evidence); G. Kurth, “*Francia* and *francus*,” in his *Études franques*, vol. 1 (Paris 1919), 68–137.

⁴⁵ Assumption: for example, W. Pohl, “Introduction: Strategies of Power,” in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (Leiden 1998) 1–7; *ibid.*, “Social Languages, Identities, and the Control of Discourse,” in E. Chrysos and I. Wood (eds), *East and West: Modes of Communication* (Leiden 1999), 127–141.

⁴⁶ P. Huyse, “Die sasanidische Königstitulatur: Eine Gegenüberstellung der Quellen”, in J. Wiesehöfer and P. Huyse (eds), *Ērān ud Anērān: Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen dem Sasanidenreich und der Mittelmeerwelt* (Munich, 2006) 181–201; G. Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on its Origin* (Rome 1989), 129–131.

⁴⁷ *Ep. Austr.* 25 (n. 40 above), 26, 42, 47 *tit.*

⁴⁸ Cf. Agathias, *Hist.* I 4.3: the Frankish king Theodebert I takes umbrage at Justinian’s “ethnic” victory titles; Agathias’ observation of course must be understood as a Constantinopolitan interpretation of the function of imperial victory titulature (see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* [Cambridge-Paris 1986]).

Ethnic group labels

The opportunity to compare even this small sample of the rhetoric of Byzantine and western chancelleries throws into relief these divergent representations of the states and their relationship. Beyond the uses of ethnic names as defining labels, however, the very appearance of “ethnic” terms themselves in *Ep. Austr.*, and indeed in other late antique sources, warrants comment. We are so accustomed to “barbarian” or “Germanic” peoples such as Goths, Franks, Vandals, and Alamanni as actors on the pages of histories that the appearance of these terms in our sources seems unremarkable. But it is essential to understand that these terms are themselves drawn from the practices of Hellenistic ethnographic thought. They construct current political and social conditions from a Byzantine perspective, using structures of ethnographic thought to frame discussion in terms inherently privileging imperial interests; they need not necessarily reflect the “other” side’s self-perception of group identity, and indeed are quite unlikely to coincide with genuine “barbarian” self-identifications. The ethnic labels, even if morphologically “Germanic” or otherwise linguistically “barbarian” in origin, are not necessarily real contemporary autonyms, “indigenous” terms of self-expression used by peoples themselves to express a non-Roman identity (though this, traditionally, is how they have been interpreted and used in modern scholarship). Instead, the names by which we know the “barbarian” groups of the fifth- and sixth-century post-imperial West are “generic” labels, perhaps drawn originally from specific “barbarian” autonyms but applied loosely by Roman/Byzantine observers to label and simplify complex and shifting contemporary political groupings. Barbarian ethnonyms were applied taxonomically – for example, to all groups living in the same geographical area (as in earlier antiquity the term “Scythian” ceased to represent a real ethnicity and became a label for any peoples on the lower Danube) or perceived as belonging to the same political grouping (for example, Procopius comments that all barbarians living in north Africa were labelled “Vandals”⁴⁹). Other, compound labels such as Visigoth, Ostrogoth, and Gothogreek seem to have been Roman/Byzantine ethnographic inventions, and are even further from being genuine autonyms.⁵⁰

This is not the place for a full discussion of how modern scholarship has misappropriated Hellenistic practices of ethnographic categorisation in order to construct a largely fictitious “Germanic” past, but the exchange of letters in *Ep. Austr.* does provide one small illustration of the point. The three Byzantine letters, of Maurice and the exarch, all use the term “Roman” regularly, referring to the eastern polity, the imperial army, and also the population of Italy; Childebert likewise regularly refers to “the Roman republic”.⁵¹ But the Austrasian royal letters, when referring to the king’s own subjects, never use the term “Frank” or, indeed, any ethnic name; they do not assert any “ethnic” identity in apposition to “Roman.” Nor do the several earlier letters of Frankish kings in the collection. One of these letters was a reply of king Theodebert I to Justinian, in which he outlines the regions under his political domination, described in a mix of geographical and ethnic terms. These

⁴⁹ Procopius, *Wars* III.5.21.

⁵⁰ Walter Goffart, “The Supposedly ‘Frankish’ Table of Nations,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983) = his *Rome’s Fall and After* (London 1989), 155, 163; Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 332–489 (Oxford 1991), 331–332; Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy*, 37–38; Andrew Gillett, “Jordanes and Ablabius,” in Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* X, Collection Latomus 254 (Brussels 2000), 495–500.

⁵¹ Maurice and the exarch: *Ep. Austr.* 40.7, 10, 41.4, 42.2. Childebert: *Ep. Austr.* 28.2, 29.1, 32.2, 33.2, 34.2, 35.2, 36.2, 37.2, 38.2, 39.2, 45.2, 46.2, 47.2.

include *Francia*, used by Theodebert with no evident sense of self-identification.⁵² There are a number of parallels to this absence of reference to ethnic identity in documents from Frankish Gaul. The major literary source for sixth-century Frankish Gaul is Gregory, bishop of Tours (which lay within the Austrasian kingdom), author of an extensive set of *Histories* and a substantial collection of saints' lives and *miraculae*. It has long been recognised that Gregory rarely uses the term "Frank" to describe individuals.⁵³ Like other authors, Gregory does use the term in the form "king of the Franks", "king of the Goths", and so on, to distinguish between rulers of the Frankish, Gothic, and other western states – but, as discussed above, royal chancellery documents (some preserved in Gregory's own text⁵⁴) show that neither such "ethnic" royal titles, nor familiar labels for states in the form "kingdom of the Franks," represent genuine official titulature of the fifth and sixth centuries in Gaul or elsewhere in the West; Gregory's usage is literary, not official. Below that level of identification, Gregory registers limited consciousness of "Frankish" or other ethnic identifications of individuals in sixth-century Gaul. The same is true of "ethnic" group identification throughout the fifth- and sixth-century western kingdoms more generally: attestations of genuine emic ethnic self-identification, as opposed to etic labelling, are rare.⁵⁵ The Austrasian royal letters add to this evidence for the infrequency of explicit ethnic self-identification in sources from sixth-century Gaul, a rarity obscured by the ethnographic practices of both Byzantine sources and modern discussions.

Conclusion

It is unsurprising that correspondence between two sides in a somewhat uneasy military alliance should demonstrate divergent perceptions of political realities. There is indeed a fundamental divergence between the Austrasian and Constantinopolitan letters beyond those discussed above: the Austrasian letters consistently refer to the common benefits

⁵² *Ep. Austr.* 20.2: in response to a request from Justinian, Theodebert outlines the area of his control *per diversas gentes adque provincias* which includes *Francia*. In this letter "Francia" is presented as only part of Theodebert's *dominatio*, not as the territory of, for example, an ethnic "heartland" to which other regions are subjugated. The letter uses an "ethnic" name, *Wesigoti*, that is a Byzantine coinage not an autonym (see n. 50 above), suggesting that the ethnic terminology used in the letter "echoes back" Byzantine usage.

⁵³ The significance of this observation is interpreted in widely differing ways: Kurth, "*Francia and francus*"; W. Goffart, "Foreigners in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours," in *Rome's Fall and After* (London 1989), 275–291; E. James, "Gregory of Tours and the Franks," *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval Europe* (Toronto 1998), 51–66. It is striking – and wholly characteristic of Gregory – that his few uses of the term *Francus* to describe individuals or practices often have a satirical ring because it is included precisely in situations in which a person's secular status utterly fails to provide security against disorder; for example, *Greg. Tur. Hist.* VII.32–33: envoys between Merovingian leaders are solemnly protected *iuxta ritum Francorum* but, predictably, are abused grievously by their host; X.2: Gripo, the hapless survivor of a farcical but deadly misunderstanding during an Austrasian embassy to Constantinople, is described only as *Francus* (his ill-fated companions are described by their offices or aristocratic connections). Such a satirical usage, if correctly identified, would backhandedly attest a valorised sense of the term *Francus*, the value of which, like other secular status-markers, Gregory consistently undermines. Nevertheless, because of Gregory's selectivity and manner of usage, the term clearly represents neither a homogenous group identification nor Gregory's personal self-designation (as suggested, for example, by James, above). Some earlier bishops from Austrasian regions use the terms *Franci* and *Francia*: *Ep. Austr.* 8.1, 18 (in both cases in apposition to the royalty of the Lombards, see next note); 11.2.

⁵⁴ I.e., the Treaty of Andelot: *Greg. Tur. Hist.* IX.20.

⁵⁵ Cf. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy*, 348–349.

towards which both sides are working, whereas all three imperial letters berate Childebert for his failure to fulfil promises to support the campaign against Lombard forces in north Italy. This is a central disagreement arising directly from the issue generating the exchange of communications, Austrasian auxiliary military aid to Byzantine campaigns in Italy. The differences discussed above, however, are contextual matters; they are motivated by less immediate but deeper conceptions and presentations of the contemporary milieu. Consistently, the barrier between Constantinopolitan and Austrasian presentations of each other and their relationship is ethnological. The emperor and the exarch refer to the polity ruled by Childebert not as a state but as an ethnic group, “Franks,” in the same manner that both Constantinopolitan and Austrasian correspondents refer to the Lombard enemy in northern Italy; Childebert, like his predecessors, never describes his own state or populace in these terms. Whereas Childebert invokes the historical and contemporary cultural-religious unity of “both parts” of the Roman East and post-imperial West, Maurice and the exarch set Childebert’s *regnum* outside the empire, as an ethnic group not a state. Childebert, styling himself by terms drawn from the Roman political lexicon as *rex* and *dominus* (as other post-Roman monarchs had done for the last century and a half), is addressed by Maurice and the exarch as “King of the Franks”, a ruler of a foreign ethnic group whose place is set amongst the kaleidoscope of enemy and allied ethnic groups standing outside the Roman empire (and, more broadly, the Hellenistic cultural tradition) regularly conquered by the emperor himself. The role of the Franks in these international relations is reduced by single-word epithets to that of supportive pugnaciousness, just as the role of the Lombards is pithily defined as wicked infidelity.

These constructions in Constantinopolitan epistolography are all so conventional, both in their conception and in the literary tropes used to express them, as to pass unnoticed by the jaded modern reader. They concur with and compound the ethnographically-defined conception of the period that we inherit from Procopius and Jordanes. But these familiar conventions ought not to drown out the dissonance between Merovingian and Byzantine rhetorics in this epistolary exchange, for the Austrasian letters give us a little insight into the actual self-representation of the rulers of post-imperial Gaul, and their conception – or at least representation – of their place in the Roman world.

The drafters of Childebert’s letters stressed the unity of interests between Frankish Gaul and the eastern empire. Although ethnographical conventions were used by the imperial correspondents to deflect that claim, ethnography does in fact mark commonalities between the western and eastern parts of the former Roman empire. The Austrasian royal letters do not represent resistance to this ancient discourse, merely attempts to pursue rhetorical ploys more profitable to the immediate purposes of the court. When rhetorically convenient, ethnographic tropes are exploited by the Austrasian chancellery with familiarity and equanimity.⁵⁶ There could be no clearer sign of the shared perpetuation of Hellenistic cultural templates among the Christian successors to the Roman empire.

⁵⁶ Cf. at nn. 25–26, 52 above.

Roger Scott

Interpreting the Late Fifth and Early Sixth Centuries from Byzantine Chronicle Trivia

The Chronicle of John Malalas has long had a poor reputation,¹ even worse than that of other Byzantine chronicles. By contrast the classicizing history of Procopius has enjoyed a high reputation, and deservedly so. Yet Procopius' coverage of events is limited by his genre fairly much to war and politics, which in turn has led to a distortion of Justinian's reign by some modern historians. Here our interpretation and understanding of Byzantine *imperium* has been influenced by our pre-conceived assumptions on 'culture'. As a result, we give a higher priority to a source of assumed high culture (Procopius) than to one which appears to operate at a decidedly lower level (Malalas). Elsewhere² I have argued that Malalas' farrago of seemingly unimportant events in Book XVIII on Justinian in fact provides a better guide to Justinian's reign than does Procopius' fine classicizing account of wars in that it reveals those wars in a proper perspective. It records and so draws attention to so much that is not war. Here I want to show that what can be learned from the apparent trivia preserved in chronicle accounts of the late fifth and early sixth centuries is also more worthy of note than can be appreciated from standard accounts. So, for the sixth century, through undue preference being given to Procopius, Justinian's recovery of the Western Empire in particular has been exaggerated to the point of it dominating modern accounts with little attention being paid to the wide range of other material provided by Malalas. What we need to remember is that Justinian's intervention in Italy did not occur until the

¹ For a brief account of criticisms of Malalas, see B. Croke, "The Development of a Critical Text", in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Studies in John Malalas* (Byzantina Australiensia 6, Sydney 1990), 313–325 together with the preface ix–x citing *inter alia* Humphrey Prideaux who, even before the first edition was published in 1691, wrote in 1674 that "more than halfe the book is stuffed with ridiculous lys." The attacks have continued since then almost unabated, already becoming even worse in the twenty-first century with Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (London 2007), describing Malalas as a fraud (251) and a charlatan (255). For recent favourable assessments of Malalas' worth see M. Meier, "Natural Disasters in the *Chronographia* of John Malalas: Reflections on their Function, An Initial Sketch", *The Medieval History Journal* 10 (2007), 237–265, together with comments spread through his *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians: Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingensbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Göttingen 2003); J. Beaucamp et al., *Recherches sur la chronique de Jean Malalas*, 2 vols (Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance 15 & 24, Paris 2004–2006). For an excellent survey, see E. Jeffreys, "The Beginning of Byzantine Chronography: John Malalas", in G. Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography: I Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D* (Leiden 2003), 497–527. Citations from Malalas are by book and paragraph number as in E. and M. Jeffreys, R. Scott *et al.*, *Malalas, A Translation* (Byzantina Australiensia 4, Melbourne 1986), which here (but not always elsewhere) correspond with *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. I. Thurn (CFHB 35, Berlin and New York 2000). In this volume in their honour, I happily acknowledge my debt (and I am sure that of the rest of the team as well) to Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys for their outstanding work in the Australian Malalas Project.

² R. Scott, "Writing the Reign of Justinian: Malalas versus Theophanes", in P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (eds), *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?* (Byzantina Australiensia 10, Brisbane 1996), 21–34; cf. R. Scott, "Narrating Justinian: From Malalas to Manasses", in J. Burke *et al.* (eds), *Byzantine Narrative* (Byzantina Australiensia 16, Melbourne 2006), 29–46.

eighth year of his reign,³ and even then he only devoted very limited resources to it.⁴ Furthermore he wanted to withdraw from Italy before the final victory so that he could use those limited resources to face more urgent and significant problems in the east, where he had not only to cope with Persian invasions but also found it increasingly difficult to control the countryside within the Empire, not to mention problems arising in the aftermath of the plague. These problems are not, of course, immediately apparent in Malalas either, but he does provide the necessary context. What does come out repeatedly from the supposed mass of trivia in Malalas' narrative is instead the importance of Christianity, the church and the pious emperor in everyday society, impinging on so many facets of people's lives, even though Malalas himself does not appear to be interested in theological issues. Here what is important to note is that the chronicle does not merely provide useful individual pieces of evidence but more particularly it is the actual whole selection of material that, despite its superficiality, provides a way of interpreting a period with at least as great validity as that to be found in the more respected classicizing sources. My argument here is that these same factors also apply to the late fifth and early sixth centuries.

It is also important in studying Malalas to take note of the difference between the early books I–XIV, where he certainly alleges that he is taking his material from earlier chroniclers (although equally he is in fact reinterpreting these accounts of the past to explain the present),⁵ and the last four books (XV–XVIII) where such material is not available to him, so he becomes in effect the primary source. Most criticisms of Malalas' accuracy apply to the first fourteen books. The common criticism of the later books is not so much on accuracy, but that the material so often appears trivial and that the treatment is so superficial. Yet, as is also the case with book XVIII on Justinian, it is the very ordinariness of the material that is important, as is the apparently superficial treatment, as it is this that helps provide a sixth-century perspective on the period as a whole and particularly on the events to which we tend to give most attention and so perhaps makes us think a little about the supposed trivia which our pre-conditioned approach to what is important can so easily make us ignore. Here we do need to remember that in books XV to XVIII of Malalas we have a primary source written by at least a tolerably well educated contemporary recording the events of his own lifetime.

³ Note that by this stage Justinian had already embarked on or carried out most of the endeavours for which his reign is famous: codification of the laws (with first edition of the *Codex Iustinianus* [hereafter *Cod. Iust.*] undertaken in February 528 and completed by April 529; and with the *Institutes* promulgated in November 533, the *Digest* in December 533 and the second edition of *Cod. Iust.* promulgated in November 534); work began on Hagia Sophia on 23 Feb. 532, just 5 weeks after the Nika riots (Kedrenos, *Compendium Historiarum*, ed. I. Bekker, 2 vols [Bonn 1838–1839], vol. 1, 651); while the Academy in Athens had been closed in 529 (as Malalas, XVIII.47, alone records).

⁴ The force of 15,000 sent against the Vandals has been described as “dangerously small” by, for example, John Barker, *Justinian and the Later Roman Empire* (Madison 1966), 141, though it was twice the size of the force of 7,500 later sent to recover the western empire in 534. In that same year (534) Justinian sent a force of 6,000 to help install a monophysite patriarch in Alexandria (*La chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. J.B. Chabot, 3 vols [Paris 1899–1904], vol. 2, 194), which helps underline how little significance Justinian actually gave to recovering the western empire. By contrast the disastrous earlier campaign against the Vandals in 468 supposedly involved a force of 100,000 (Procopius, *Vand.* 1.6.1) and a fleet of 1,113 ships (Kedrenos, vol. 1, 613, cf. C. Müller, *FGH* 4.110), while the peaceful Anastasius put 52,000 into the field for the Persian Wars in 503 (Joshua Stylites, *Chronicle* 54, trans. with notes and introduction by F.R. Trombley and J.W. Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite* [Translated Texts for Historians 32, Liverpool 2000], 65).

⁵ R. Scott, “Malalas' View of the Classical Past”, in G.W. Clarke (ed.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Canberra 1990), 147–164.

My aim in this paper is to tease more out from these late books, and in particular to suggest that trivial events reported by chroniclers for the late fifth century are also significant and need to be taken note of for interpreting the sixth century. (This is on the good arithmetical principle that, as the fifth century comes immediately before the sixth century, it probably provides a good introduction to the sixth century). I trust that this will not only provide a different perspective on the late fifth century, but will also help reinforce my own faith in Malalas' account of the sixth century. For Malalas' account of the late fifth century reveals signs of social change, presumably under Christian influence but quite unconnected with theological questions. I just draw attention to a very few small events which are recorded in chronicles, but which are understandably considered too trivial to be worth a mention in the important books on History. They do, however, provide a vital clue for an increasing presence of the church in secular matters or the infiltration of Christian ideas on secular activities.⁶ I need to stress that I am not here concerned with the adoption of Christian beliefs in a theological sense nor yet the building of churches nor the power of the Church hierarchy politically or economically, but rather a change in life-style that appears as if it should be ascribed to an acceptance of Christian attitudes.⁷ Rather I shall draw attention to a jumble of trivial facts which are recorded in chronicles and which perhaps also provide a more revealing picture of an age than an ordered analytical history of important events.

First of all, 'Sundays'. Malalas relates that the emperor Leo banned public entertainment on Sundays in 469.

The most sacred emperor Leo ordered that Sundays should be days of rest, promulgating a sacred law on the subject, to the effect that neither flute nor lyre nor any other musical instrument should be played on Sunday, but that everyone should have a holiday. And all observed it.⁸

The *Chronicon Paschale* from the early seventh century is virtually identical with Malalas' version and clearly copied from him, including the ban on music. The chronicle accounts of Leo's law are confirmed by an entry in the Justinianic Code, which contains some extra details, but also has a significant omission. Leo decreed that there were to be no public exhibitions on Sunday which

was to be free from the administration of Justice...The harsh voice of the public crier will be silenced...We do not permit persons who are at leisure during this sacred day to devote themselves to obscene pleasures; and no one shall demand theatrical exhibitions, the contests of the circus and the melancholy spectacle of wild beasts; and when our birthday happens to fall on Sunday, celebrations shall be postponed. If anyone should think that upon this holy day he can venture to interest himself in exhibitions; or the

⁶ Publication of a recent conference shows archaeologists also looking to what have been regarded as relatively insignificant objects to help identify signs of social change in Late Antiquity. They do not, however, appear to be concerned with my query of an increasing presence of the church in secular matters or the infiltration of Christian ideas on secular activities. See L. Lavan, E. Swift, T. Putzeys (eds), *Objects in Context, Objects in Use: Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity* (Late Antique Archaeology 5, Leiden and Boston 2007).

⁷ Others such as Peter Brown in his *Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York 1988) have explored this on a much wider scale. Though their treatment is well beyond my scope, I trust that I can offer a different perspective.

⁸ Malalas XIV. 39.

subordinate of any judge...should violate the provisions of this law, he shall suffer the loss of his employment and the confiscation of his property (*Cod. Iust.* III.12.9. dated 9 Dec 469).⁹

Much of Leo's law, as recorded in the Justinianic code, simply endorses earlier legislation preserved for us in the Theodosian code, which show two stages dealing with two aspects. Constantine, as the first Christian emperor, was basically concerned with working on Sunday. Judicial and legal transactions were forbidden, while farming and agriculture were allowed to go on as usual.¹⁰ So Constantine does not appear to have been concerned at all about entertainment on Sundays or keeping noise levels down. His restrictions on litigation on Sundays were repeated by Theodosius I and his colleagues in 386 (*CTh.* 2.8.18). But in the last decade of the fourth century and the first decade of the fifth there was a shift to a second stage which prohibited various forms of organized entertainment. So "circus contests" were banned on Sundays in 392 (*CTh.* 2.8.20) as too were theatrical plays and spectacles in 399, while Honorius and Theodosius permitted "absolutely no amusements to be produced" (*CTh.* 2.8.25). So certainly those two decades do extend Constantine's legislation considerably from litigation to entertainment. But they are still limited to organized entertainment, particularly official state entertainment. This would also seem to be confirmed by the version of Leo's law preserved in Justinian's Code.

But the version reported by Malalas seems to extend this to private entertainment. The version in the Code makes no mention of the prohibition on playing musical instruments, which is recorded by both Malalas and the *Chronicon Paschale* and indeed gets the main attention in the chronicle accounts. Perhaps this had been rescinded by the time of Justinian but in that case it needs noting that its effect is still considered newsworthy by the *Chronicon Paschale* in the seventh century, long after Justinian's publication of the code. The ban on music and entertainment on Sundays was what the Chroniclers thought important.

In the context of world history or even of Leo's reign, this may seem a tiny matter but the legislation must have made quite a difference in the character of the day and it was presumably influenced by Christianity.¹¹ Those of us who have experienced the reverse change in the observance of Sunday during the second half of the twentieth century will best appreciate the difference.¹² Notably this is one of the few items of information that the Chronicles choose to record about Leo's reign. It is something that must have stood out and the fact that the legislation is retained in the Justinianic code shows that it continued to be in force, even if the emphasis was changed. Malalas and the *Chronicon Paschale* do also both note, for what it is worth, that this was legislation that everyone obeyed, and in making such a statement they necessarily draw further attention to it.

On its own Leo's legislation on Sundays is scarcely worth noting, but his prohibition "of melancholy spectacles of wild beasts" on Sundays led to Anastasius' attempt to ban them

⁹ Trans. S.P. Scott, *The Civil Law*, 18 vols (Cincinnati 1932), vol. 12, 277 but listed as III.12.10.1.

¹⁰ *Cod. Iust.* 3.12.2 (321) cf. *CTh.* 2.8.1 which confines itself to litigation and does not include the allowance for farming.

¹¹ Indeed the earlier versions of the legislation make this quite clear, noting that the day of the Sun was rightly called the Lord's day (*CTh.* 2.8.18, cf. 2.8.1, "Sunday is celebrated on account of its own veneration").

¹² I recall the Sundays of my own childhood in Australia with no shops open whatever, no theatres or cinema, no sport, no bars and no petrol stations, but with virtually obligatory church services and with the rest of the day spent sitting around quietly at home. Those Sundays owed their limitations to attitudes imposed in the nineteenth century. But Leo's legislation, which goes so much further than that of Constantine and his successors, must have had a similar effect.

entirely. Our source this time is the Syriac chronicle of pseudo-Joshua Stylites.¹³ The chronicler tells us that in 498 Anastasius banned wild beast shows altogether and for this he was praised by panegyrists. Perhaps not very much actually changed since we continue to hear about them for quite a while.¹⁴ But though there may not have been a great change in practice, the issue had clearly been raised. So Leo's ban on "the melancholy spectacles of wild beasts" does seem to mark the beginning of a change in attitude which, along with his ban on music and entertainment on Sundays, surely marks a change in the feel of everyday life.

Furthermore Joshua Stylites also records that mimes were banned in 502.¹⁵ The changes to Sundays, mimes and wild beast fights all indicate some change to a way of life and are fairly obviously influenced by Christianity, but without involving theological issues, even if this seems a somewhat belated effect. Malalas also here includes a note that Anastasius forbade the tattooing of slaves, and it looks as if he must have seriously considered abolishing slavery totally. To quote Malalas, "The law was as follows: 'That it is our desire to free those under the yoke of slavery. How therefore can we tolerate that those who are free be brought into a servile condition?'"¹⁶ Presumably this did not get very far and nothing radical was actually done about slavery. Malalas simply continues with another law of Anastasius that forbade the adoption of children (male or female) except by a rescript which guaranteed their right to inherit. But with the law on adoption added to the laws on Sundays, mimes, wild beast fights and slavery, this amounts to quite a wide-ranging concern with social practices influenced by Christianity, though with none of it involving theology. There is certainly enough here to suggest that there was some serious thinking about social issues during the early part of Anastasius' reign, but the move for reform may well have begun about twenty years earlier with Leo with his legislation on wild beast spectacles and Sundays.

It probably needs pointing out that these few items take up only a tiny amount of the chroniclers' space. So it is natural for them not to be mentioned in standard accounts. But they are there and they do seem to mark a change which takes place in the late fifth century. So in Malalas, there is no sign of any such social interest anywhere in Book XIII, extending from Constantine in effect to the death of Arcadius in 408 (but with a concluding glance to the West, extending the narrative to the death of Honorius in 423 almost as an afterthought). In Book XIV, covering the period 408–474 from Theodosius II to Leo, the only sign of social change is the short statement on the legislation about Sundays while there appears to be nothing of this kind in Book XV on Zeno (474–491), although there are other signs of change to which we shall return. Book XVI has rather more with Anastasius' (491–518) concern over tattooing, slavery and adoption together with his banning of mimes and wild beast shows which is recorded in other chronicles, though most of the book offers the standard chronicle fare. But, although it is easy enough to see why these few details have been ignored, the fact remains that they are there and they do point to a gradual but

¹³ Joshua Stylites, *Chronicle* 34 (Trombley and Watt, 32). Although Trombley may be right in stating that "Anastasius' edict was evidently little more than a recapitulation of the basic law found at *CTh.* 15.11.1 [414 A.D.]", so explaining its absence from *Cod. Iust.* 11.35.1, nevertheless it was evidently advertised emphatically enough to cause the chronicler to record it.

¹⁴ Wild beast shows are still shown on consular diptychs of 506 and 517, while in 521 Justinian showed an unprecedented number of lions and leopards in his consular games, and in 537 Novel 105.1 refers to men fighting with beasts in the Cynegion in Constantinople. But that is the last reference to wild beast fights in Constantinople, though of course parades of exotic beasts were to continue for centuries.

¹⁵ Joshua Stylites, *Chronicle* 46 (Trombley and Watt, 47).

¹⁶ Mal. XVI.14.

increasing change of attitude. They do provide a context for Malalas' account of Justinian and interpreting his reign so thoroughly in Christian terms. Malalas, in his first account of Justinian's codification, reinforces this interpretation by drawing attention to four laws which he evidently regarded as particularly significant, one of them being again Anastasius' law giving natural-born children the right to inherit (Mal. XVIII. 20). These four laws, as I noted many years ago, "taken together do provide a remarkably favourable advertisement for Justinian's concern for his subjects' welfare, protecting the weak or lowly individual from being exploited by powerful magistrates, unwilling witnesses and the sins of his parents and strengthening his position in matters of inheritance."¹⁷ I also argued there that Malalas' source is probably derived from imperial propaganda, so this change of attitude is not simply the chronicler's version but represents official policy.

Justin (518–527) in Book XVII is both the ubiquitous Christian emperor as a precursor of his nephew and also a continuer of Anastasius' policies. So on the one hand we are told for instance of a comet causing fear, which it is natural to interpret as a sign from God about the reign, and of the emperor using baptism of a foreign king as an element of foreign policy.¹⁸ In both examples, the distinction between secular and sacred has become blurred which is so very much a feature of Malalas' treatment of Justinian in Book XVIII. On the other hand, we have snippets of information which show Justin extending Anastasius' policies of providing a Christian cleansing of old customs.

One of Justin's more intriguing acts involves the privatized Olympic Games that flourished in Antioch and elsewhere long after Theodosius I had closed the famous pagan Olympic Games in Olympia in 392. Malalas has quite a lot to tell us about these Olympic Games at varying stages through the chronicle.¹⁹ It is a remarkable story beginning as early as Book IX with the bequest made by an Antiochene senator to fund the games in the days of Augustus; Antioch's later purchase from the Pisaiani in 43/44 CE of the right to hold the Olympics; the subsequent corrupt practices of Olympic officials; a description of the games under Claudius; and later another description when attended by Diocletian; Theodosius I's prefect, Antiochus Chouzon, somewhat surprisingly providing funds for the games and for the notorious Maioumas festival; a violent attack on Jews during and linked to the Olympics in 507; and finally their closure under Justin I in 520. It is probably the most persistent recurrent item through the Chronicle, but is so strange that if we did not have some supporting evidence in other sources, we might well query Malalas' veracity. These and similar games flourished across much of the Eastern Roman Empire and had much to do with local civic pride and so are part, if not of independence, at least of the individuality of provincial cities.

We do not know why Justin closed the games. Since it was presumably a crowd of Christians who attacked the local Jews and destroyed synagogues at the games in 507, presumably also by then the games had lost their pagan associations. But Malalas does associate the Olympic Games with a festival called the Maioumas.²⁰ What happened at the Maioumas is unclear, but it had incurred the wrath of the Church. It also gets linked with an

¹⁷ R. Scott, "Malalas and Justinian's Codification", in E. & M. Jeffreys and A. Moffatt (eds), *Byzantine Papers* (Canberra 1981), 14.

¹⁸ Baptism in effect rendered the foreign king and his nation subject to the Roman emperor.

¹⁹ The material is conveniently gathered by A. Schenk von Stauffenberg, *Die römischen Kaiser Geschichte bei Malalas* (Stuttgart 1931), 412–443. See too G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton 1961), *passim*; *idem*, "The Olympic Games of Antioch in the Fourth century A.D.", *TAPA* 70 (1939), 428–438; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch, City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1972), 136–144.

²⁰ Malalas XII.3; G. Greatrex and J.W. Watt, "One, Two or Three Feasts: The Brytae, the Maioumas and the May Festival at Edessa", *Oriens Christianus* 83 (1999), 1–21.

equally obscure festival known as Brytae, and this we know Anastasius did close in Constantinople. So the closures are probably both part of Christian cleaning up of supposedly immoral pagan festivals and part of the imperial takeover of entertainment. This is all part of the centralisation of control that Alan Cameron has so brilliantly discussed for chariot racing²¹ and of the integration of city ceremonial within imperial ceremonial that Averil Cameron sees developing until its culmination in the accession of Justin II in 565.²² But we are still back in the 490s for the Brytae and 520 for the Olympics. So the closure of the Olympic Games under Justin may be seen as reflecting two themes of Malalas' treatment of Justinian in Book XVIII: the struggle by the central government to limit the independence of cities; and the increasingly pervasive effect of Christianity on the social and secular life of the Empire during the late fifth and early sixth centuries.

The way, however, in which the local Church had become the focal point for the secular life of citizens rather than the governor's praetorium is revealed most tellingly in an account of a spontaneous gathering to celebrate the abolition of a hated tax.

The whole city rejoiced. They all dressed up in white, from the greatest to the least, and carrying candles and burning censers, to the accompaniment of psalms and hymns, they went out to the martyrion of Mar Sergius and Mar Simon, thanking God and praising the emperor. There they held a eucharist, and on coming back into the city they extended the feast of joy and pleasure for a whole week, and decreed that they would celebrate this feast every year. All the tradesmen sat around and had a good time, [bathing and] relaxing in the courtyard of the (City) Church and all the city's colonnades.²³

The place is Edessa; the writer is again pseudo-Joshua the Stylite; the event is Anastasios' abolition of the *chrysargyron* and the date is most probably in May 498. What I want to draw attention to is that although the celebration is all to do with a secular matter – the abolition of a hated tax – the character of the procession is religious and it culminates at the church and with a church service. There is no reference to the governor or any civic authority or civic building. The church has already become the focal point of a civic gathering, even though in this case it has involved leaving the city. To this one could add the increasing occurrence of acclamations of public figures being voiced in church; public notices being read in church; laws and official notices being publicised by being posted on Church doors; and monks being used in city deputations (which was at least a move upward from their use as thugs at synods).

There are various other items that could be introduced here,²⁴ but my point is that these are all part of the supposed trivia to be found in chronicles and not worthy of treatment in serious histories. Not one of these trivia is mentioned in the huge volume XIV of the *Cambridge Ancient History* dealing with the fifth and sixth centuries, nor would one expect to find such minor matters being treated in such a volume. And yet it is these small events

²¹ A.D.E. Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford 1976), especially 193–229.

²² A.M. Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium", *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35, rp. *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (London 1981) and in M. Mullett and R. Scott (eds), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham 1981), 205–234.

²³ Joshua Stylites, *Chronicle* 31 (Trombley and Watt, 30–31).

²⁴ For example, many different aspects of chariot races and those involved; distribution of largesse by emperors; the story about Theoderich's anger over injustice resulting from incompetent lawyers; the story of an alchemist and so on.

that best indicate a change in the way of life that is significant. It was also probably only in the late fifth century that Christian emperors became really concerned with Christian social legislation. Until then, emperors and the ecclesiastical authorities had been more concerned with securing the church's legal and theological status. So we now hear elsewhere for instance of people of lower status succeeding in law cases against those of higher status in the reign of Zeno, *humiliores* winning against *honestiores*, something that would have been unthinkable even half a century earlier,²⁵ but which ties in so well with the image which Justinian presented about himself in advertising his codification of the laws and which Malalas preserves. My point, however, is that this impressive testimony draws attention to the way scholarship has treated chronicles. The chronicles, especially Malalas, have been criticized for the triviality of their subject matter which is then ignored. Yet these trivial details show that the chronicles recorded revealing aspects of their world which scholars, disparaging such triviality, have failed to appreciate.

One other item from Malalas' book XV on Zeno is worthy of attention. He tells the story of Theoderich's wisdom, once he becomes ruler in Rome, in helping a lady against influential lawyers. The story might possibly be included as evidence of Christian social justice, but it is confined to the nobility and appears rather to be just one of a collection of stories told to enhance Theoderich's reputation among Romans.²⁶ It is intriguing to speculate on why Malalas chose to include the story

As soon as Theoderich became king, a Roman widow of senatorial rank, named Juvenalia, approached him with the following information, "For 30 years I have been involved in a law-case with the patrician Firmus. Please free me from it". So he brought in the lawyers of both parties and said to them, "If you do not give them the judgement and discharge them by tomorrow or the day after it, I shall behead you". So they sat down for two days, pronounced a legal decision, gave them a judgement and discharged them. Juvenalia lit some candles and approached Theoderich to thank him for freeing her from her case. He was angry with the lawyers, summoned them and said, "Why did you not do in 30 years what you have done in two days so as to discharge them?" So he sent and had the lawyers of both parties beheaded, and there was much fear. He published a decree about each law (Mal. XV.10).

A reason for displaying the story here is that the space it takes up amounts to more than the total space that Malalas devotes to Justinian's wars in the West. This helps emphasize how small a part those wars played in Byzantine sixth-century consciousness. Added to this is the favourable treatment of Theoderich and the fact that he appears as not merely a legitimate ruler, but a just ruler. Theoderich's legitimacy as the ruler of Rome had been made clear in Malalas' previous paragraph, which is one-and-a-half times the length of the anecdote and which recorded Theoderich's rise from his time in Constantinople to his acquisition of power in Rome.

²⁵ H.B. Dewing, "A *Dialysis* of the Fifth Century", *TAPA* 53 (1922), 113–127; cf. Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1999), 179–183. Harries also points out to me that "there is Berlin papyrus 1024 from Hermoupolis in Egypt (4th to 5th centuries) about the conviction of a (local) senator, Diodemus of Alexandria, for the murder of a prostitute; the judge exiled Diodemus and ordered him to pay 10 per cent of his property to the girl's widowed mother, for loss of earnings".

²⁶ See J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford 1992), 106–107.

During his reign the ex-consul Theoderich, the son of Valamer, who had been brought up and educated in Constantinople, was *magister militum praesentalis*. But after seeing what had happened to Armatas, he became afraid of the emperor Zeno. So he took his army and left Constantinople, making for Selymbria because of the *numeri* stationed there. He then rebelled and seized all Thrace. He marched against the emperor Zeno as far as Sykai, which is opposite Constantinople, across the strait, and cut the city's aqueduct. After remaining for a number of days without being able to harm the emperor, he left there and set off for Rome which was then controlled by Odovacer, king of the barbarians. He made war on Odovacer with the treacherous support of the Roman senate and captured both Rome and king Odovacer without any loss. He took control of Rome after killing Odovacer, in whose place he ruled Rome as king for 47 years. After this he was reconciled with the emperor Zeno and did everything in accordance with his wishes, recognizing the consuls of Constantinople and praetorian prefects; he also received the codicils of his chief magistrates from the emperor Zeno, notifying Zeno whom he wanted to be appointed. He even received the rods of the consuls in the presence of the emperor himself (Malalas XV.9).

Theoderich thus has received far more attention from Malalas than Justinian's supposed attempt to restore the Western empire to 'Roman' rule. There is no mention of Theoderich being an Ostrogoth, but rather he is presented as a Constantinopolitan by education and background and as the legitimate *magister militum* who recovers Rome "which was then controlled by Odovacer, king of the barbarians". His revolt from Zeno is justified by Malalas as a natural response to Zeno's execution of Armatas, the other *magister militum praesentalis*, where Malalas' narrative draws attention to Zeno's faithless deception. Far from seeing Theoderich as the Empire's enemy, Malalas goes to some length to emphasize Theoderich's legitimacy.

This treatment of Theoderich is all the more remarkable in that it is about the only incident to which Malalas gives any attention during Zeno's reign other than the revolts of Basiliscus and Illus, neither of whom receive anywhere near so favourable treatment. In fact Malalas' reading of Zeno's reign is remarkably close to my reading of Justinian's reign. The West did not pose a problem and the emperor recognized this. There Theoderich had recovered Italy for the Empire and loyally provided security and just Christian (albeit Arian) government for 47 years. The emperor's problems lay in the East where he could scarcely maintain control of his territory against various usurpations which take up almost all of Malalas' narrative. It seems his short excursus on Theoderich, including the anecdote of the widow Juvenalia, is only included to demonstrate the contrast with the chaos of the East, where emperors based in Constantinople struggled against usurpers to maintain control over their territory. The fact that Malalas places Theoderich in his narrative on Zeno would seem to confirm this, as Theoderich, though he did set out with Zeno's support and reached Italy still within Zeno's reign, did not come either to his power-sharing arrangement with Odovacer or his killing of him until 493 in Anastasius' reign. Malalas' exaggeration of the length of Theoderich's reign in Italy (47 years instead of 33)²⁷ also helps him to fit Theoderich into his account of Zeno. Irrespective of the inaccuracies, it is a remarkable reading of relations with the West for a contemporary and subject of

²⁷ Malalas presumably confused Theoderich's reign as king of the Goths (arguably 471–526: see Martindale, *PLRE*. 2.1078) with his rule in Italy. Malalas probably would have known the date of Theoderich's death in 526 though he does not mention it.

Justinian.²⁸ What is also intriguing is that this account must have been part of the first edition of Malalas. We cannot be exactly sure of the date of that first edition but it was almost certainly somewhere between 535 and 540 at the height of Justinian's western campaign. This does underline both that Justinian's contemporary attempts to explain the invasion and also the later propaganda of a divinely-supported restoration of the Western empire, which has so convinced modern scholarship, must have faced a considerable challenge to gain any credibility among his contemporaries. But what also needs emphasizing is that this reading of the period depends heavily on giving due importance to the trivia provided by chronicles.

Malalas' Book XVI on Anastasius confirms this reading of the period. There are no further references to the West, presumably because it remained peaceful under Theoderich and so was not newsworthy, a situation that continued through Book XVII on Justin. Anastasius' problems are local, Eastern and more various than those of Zeno. There were still problems with the Isaurians (3), with Antioch (2,6); with the circus factions (2,4,6), with Persia (9–10), with bishops (11), with the need to appoint *vindices* (12), with Alexandria and a shortage of oil (15), with Thrace and Vitalian (16, a long section), with the Huns (17), with an earthquake (18), and with religious riots (19), all of which are reported. So one certainly gets a strong impression from the narrative of the difficulties with which Anastasius had to contend. Against these problems, Anastasius' record as a Christian reforming emperor in Malalas is good. In addition to his approach to slavery and adoption (14), which we discussed earlier, he is the emperor who abolished the *chrysargyron* tax (7) which led to the exuberant rejoicing in Edessa; and building works in Antioch and throughout the Empire (8). There are only a very few other items mentioned at all. At his death Anastasius is given a rare favourable summary

In addition to his original gifts the emperor Anastasios again sent other gifts to all tax-payers in his state. In every city of the Roman state he carried out a variety of building projects, including walls and aqueducts; he dredged harbours, constructed public baths from their foundations and provided much else in every city (Mal. XVI. 21).

For the emperor castigated for heresy in the Byzantine tradition, this is a remarkable epitaph. It perhaps also reflects a concern with retaining authority in the provinces.

Malalas' treatment of the late fifth century thus shows how secular life was being increasingly adapted to Christianity; how Theoderich's rule in Italy was both accepted and seen as more significant than Justinian's western interventions; and how Constantinople was facing increasing difficulties in retaining control in the Eastern Empire, especially under Zeno but also with Anastasius. The themes are also linked and this should be taken into account in any assessment of Justinian's reign, where again Malalas' narrative draws attention to the blurring of distinctions between religious and secular events and to the importance of the emperor as God's representative in the Christianisation of secular life, as well as providing a context that reveals the comparative insignificance of Justinian's western interventions in a period of increasing pressures from both inside and outside the eastern empire. Malalas' linking of Justinian's propaganda with Anastasius' social reforms also helps point the way to interpreting Justinian's reign. This too can be linked with Malalas' approval of an emperor who inspires fear in his subjects (so clear in the fate of the beheaded lawyers in the story of Theoderich and the widow), which is also such a theme of

²⁸ It is worth remembering that Procopius, *Goth.* 2.6.14–22, had likewise put a similar claim into the mouth of Ostrogoths that they had held Italy for the Romans.

his narration of Justinian. So Malalas' narrative in Books XIV–XVII provides the proper context for interpreting Book XVIII and the reign of Justinian in a way that we cannot obtain directly from Procopius despite his greater skill, depth of analysis and detail as an historian, though this context can help us read Procopius with a greater insight and understanding. But we can only gain this understanding and insight by paying attention to the apparent trivia recorded and preserved in a humble chronicle.

Geoffrey Nathan

The *Vienna Dioscorides*' *dedicatio* to Anicia Juliana: A Usurpation of Imperial Patronage?

Since Otto von Premenstein's first examination of the famous *Vienna Dioscorides* manuscript in 1903, the tome has invited comment and questions from several generations of scholars.¹ It is a unique and lushly illustrated manuscript of the pharmacology of the ancient doctor Dioscorides, the *Materia Medica*, and in 1997 it was one of the first items placed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

Although nearly 500 folios in length, for the purposes of this paper, I want to focus specifically on the dedicatory image to the early Byzantine aristocrat, Anicia Juliana, found on the 6th folio *verso* (fig. 1). As the earliest surviving miniature of a real person, Anicia Juliana and particularly the rich iconography surrounding her has resulted in over a century of speculation about its meaning and purpose (beyond its dedicatory function). Up through the 1990s, many scholars have viewed the work as distinctively apolitical and indeed essentially private in character. Alexander Demandt and Lyn Rodley, for example, see the aristocratic lady as an educated woman well versed in the intellectual and cultural traditions of *paideia*. And as recently as 1997, Carmelo Capizzi in his biography of Anicia Juliana argued that the image displays little more than a noblewoman interested in patronising the arts.²

Twelve years ago, I, too, speculated on its meaning at an APA panel dealing with patronage in Late Antiquity.³ I argued that the piece had important political implications, and represented a quite public display of her role as a patron *par excellence*. Indeed, I suggested that the artist depicted the aristocrat not only in an idealised form, but that she was quite purposely anthropomorphised into the quality of Patronage itself. I based this assessment on three essential points. First, that the artist illustrated Anicia as an ideal patron, doing those things that a woman of her class and breeding should. Second, that her dress and physical placement, especially when compared to certain iconographic *topoi* found in late antique art, intimated certain imperial pretensions and thus suggested that Juliana was the most important patron in the Eastern Empire – a kind of benefactress *ne plus ultra*. Finally, I noted that the naturalistic figures attending Anicia, notably *Megalopsychia* (Magnanimity) and *Phronesis* (Prudence), combined with her curiously frontal, simplified, and almost artificially symmetrical face, transformed her entire being into Patronage personified.

More recently, however, other scholars have taken the image's meaning further. Athanasios Diamandopoulos writes at some length about the symbolism found in the

¹ A. von Premenstein, "Anicia Juliana im Wiener Dioskorides-Kodex", *Jahrb. der kunsth. Samml.* 24 (1903), 105–124.

² A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian* (Berlin 1989), 303; L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture. An Introduction* (Cambridge 1996); and Carmelo Capizzi, *Anicia Giuliana, La committente c.463–c.528* (Editoriale Jaca Book: Milan 1997), 121–123; cf. K. Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Byzantine Book Illumination* (London 1977), 61.

³ G. Nathan, "Anicia Juliana, the *Vienna Dioscorides*' Portrait, and the Idealized Patron", paper delivered at the American Philological Association (Chicago 1997).

portrait and argues that there are clear artistic references to Solomon and the First Temple.⁴ The comparison to Solomon had strong imperial overtones, and indeed later Anicia's building of the church of Saint Polyeuktos and the emperor Justinian's supposed response with the construction of Hagia Sophia, underscores a usurpation of imperial privilege, if not direct authority.⁵ Bente Killerich has more recently gone further, and has in no uncertain terms argued that, to cite her conclusion directly

The image in the Vienna Dioscurides presents Anicia Juliana in purple and gold, with imperial diadem, enthroned like an emperor, distributing gold coins like an emperor and receiving *proskynesis*, as if she were an emperor. The dedication flatters Juliana with...three male virtues closely associated with ruler authority.⁶

Given that my earlier analysis is somewhat at odds with these more recent ones, it is worthwhile to once again examine the miniature in both its historical and artistic context and to respond to the more recent scholarship. While Killerich's interpretation is almost certainly correct, at least in part, I think the image's meaning and purpose is somewhat more ambiguous and complex, reflecting the peculiar life and status of arguably Constantinople's most august citizen. Therefore, I intend to offer a somewhat modified proposal in attempting to assess the Anicia Juliana dedication.

I want to begin where Killerich ended her article several years ago. In offering her final thoughts, she raised the quite salient questions of artist intention and audience. What were the purposes of this *dedicatio*? For what audience was it intended? Was the image made with Juliana's knowledge or perhaps connivance? Killerich suggested in closing that, with or without Anicia's assent, this was a particularly safe form of imperial expression, since the book by definition would have a limited audience. It certainly would not have had the visual prominence of an inscription, a commissioned church, or some piece of public artwork. It could be taken, in short, as a private caprice.

This is undoubtedly true, but we must remember first that this was a show book. The richness and beauty of the craftwork – and this is suppositional – meant that it was likely to be seen, if not used, daily. David Wright has made similarly observations about the *Codex Romanus Vergil* from the mid-fifth century: the dimensions of the book, the visual quality of the images and the large, well-formed letters argue for presentation rather than consistent practical use.⁷ Under what circumstances the manuscript would have been viewed is even more speculative, although we know of display gospels being prominently displayed in monasteries in the Middle Ages. But apart from the issues of venue and audience, there are

⁴ A. Diamandopoulos, “Εἰκονογραφία βυζαντινῶν ἱατρικῶν χειρογράφων”, in H. Arhweiler (ed.), *Ἱατρικὰ βυζαντινὰ χειρόγραφα* (Athens 1995), 71–168. My thanks to Dr. Vicki Douleveras-Panayatopoulou for her help in translating this paper.

⁵ For a short summary of this controversy, see Joseph D. Alchermes, “Art and Architecture in the Age of Justinian”, in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 343–375. See also B. Killerich, “‘Salomon, jeg har overgået dig!’ Anicia Julianas kirkebyggeri i Konstantinopel”, *Kirke og Kultur* 105 (2000), 117–127.

⁶ Killerich, “The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides: Flattery or Appropriation of Imperial Imagery?”, *Symbolae Osloenses* 76 (2001), 169–190.

⁷ D. Wright, *Codicillogical Notes on the Vergilius Romanus* (Studi e Testi 345, Vatican City 1992), introduction and *passim*. Cf. *idem*, “The Persistence of Pagan Art Patronage in Fifth-Century Rome”, in I. Sevcenko and I. Hutter (eds), *Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango presented to him on April 14, 1998* (Stuttgart 1998), 354–369; Wright here seems to imply that presentation copies applied to the Vergil *Vaticanus* as well.

some broader historical issues that are worthy of consideration. By way of introduction into those issues, it is important to offer a few important details about her life, both prior to and after the creation of the *Vienna Dioscorides* manuscript.

To begin, the aristocrat had an impressive pedigree. Her father, Flavius Olybrius, was one of the last legitimate emperors of the west. Olybrius, moreover, was descended from the *gens* Anicii, the pre-eminent aristocratic family of the late antique period.⁸ Anicia's mother was descended from both sides of the Theodosian house. Hence, Anicia's great-grandfather had been Theodosius II; her grandfather, Valentinian III. And, as the daughter of an emperor, she also possessed the title of *nobilissima*, a singular distinction that permitted her certain imperial honours, if not imperial station.⁹

A second key point was that Anicia was extraordinarily wealthy. We know of three major churches that she built during her life and, if we are to accept Capizzi's discussion, at least two other major buildings.¹⁰ Her palace, adjacent to Saint Polyeuktos and yet to be excavated, was one of the grandest in Constantinople.¹¹ And apparently near the end of her life, she converted much of her wealth to great sheets of gold, which she then affixed to the vaulted ceiling of Polyeuktos.¹² Leslie Brubaker has suggested that she was the wealthiest individual in the Eastern Empire in the early sixth century.¹³

Finally, we should note that Anicia was no retiring aristocrat or anonymous member of a dead imperial household. She very actively involved herself in the political and religious controversies of the day. She engineered the designation of *patrikia* for herself – an honour not extended to her husband. On at least two occasions, she was directly at odds with sitting emperors. Much more consistently visible, however, was her role as an active participant in religious affairs. Not only did she very publicly support the Chalcedonian cause, but moreover did so visibly in her church building activities. Anicia played a prominent, if not significant role in ending the split between the eastern and western Churches in 519.¹⁴

In sum, Anicia Juliana, unlike many aristocrats living in the capital, was able to utilise her station, wealth and influence in quite public and controversial ways. In that sense, she stood apart from the rest of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy of the early sixth century.

⁸ See A. Momigliano, "Gli Anicii e la storiografia latina del VI sec. D.C.", *Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filosofiche* 8, Serie 9, 11–12 (1956), 279–297 (Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici, Roma 1960), 231–253. See slightly more recently, C. Capizzi, "Anicia Giuliana (462 ca. – 530 ca.): Ricerche sulla sua famiglia e la sua vita," *RSBN* 5 (1968), 191–226.

⁹ B. Croke, "Justinian under Justin: Reconfiguring a Reign," *BZ* 100 (2007), 13–56, addresses some of the nuances of the station and its uniqueness for Anicia in the early sixth century.

¹⁰ Capizzi (1997); cf. C. Capizzi, 'L'attività edilizia di Anicia Giuliana', *Or. Chr. An.* 204 (1977), 119–146.

¹¹ There is a brief discussion of the palace in the introduction of R.M. Harrison's excavation report of Polyeuktos; *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul vol. i*, (Princeton 1986), 5. The area is now a park, where picnickers and passersby can sit on the fragments of her palace's unearthed remains.

¹² See J. Bardill, "A New Temple for Byzantium: Anicia Juliana, King Solomon, and the Gilded Ceiling of the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople," in W. Bowden *et al.* (eds), *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 2006), 339–370; cf. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul* (1986).

¹³ L. Brubaker, "Memories of Helena: Patterns of Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," in L. James (ed.), *Women, Men, and Eunuchs* (London 1997), 52–75.

¹⁴ C. Capizzi, *Giuliana: La Committente* (1997), 78–91, argues for a prominent role. Croke, Justinian under Justin", suggests limited influence.

Unsurprisingly, many of the circumstances associated with production of the *Vienna Dioscorides* and its *dedicatio* must be seen within the time of production, probably between 512 and 515 CE.¹⁵ That was an era of considerable religious and political turmoil under the emperor Anastasius. Although a competent ruler and an excellent administrator, his Monophysitic tendencies created consternation amongst the greatly divided populace of Constantinople. Failures in ending the Acacian Schism with the Western Church, combined with the failure to reach a peaceful compromise between Orthodox and Monophysite Christians, led in 511 to a more open imperial rejection of the Orthodox line. In that year, Macedonius, the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Constantinople, was deposed and replaced with the Monophysite, Timothy. As part of this more openly Monophysite-friendly policy, Anastasius approved the alteration of the *Trishagion*, which did nothing to ameliorate the fears of the Chalcedonians. Finally, what could only be seen as a movement away from a policy of compromise, in the following year Anastasius appointed another Monophysite, Severus, to the see in Antioch.¹⁶

The results were explosive. The *magister militum per Thracias*, Vitalian, mounted a full-scale rebellion against Anastasius, which was not quelled until 515. More immediately, towards the end of the summer of 511, a general insurrection against the emperor broke out in the capital, as hostile crowds of differing Christian affiliations joined together to oust a ruler who satisfied neither Chalcedonian partisans nor Monophysite hardliners. As was the case some twenty years later in the much more serious *Nika* revolt against Justinian, the mob chose an alternative emperor to replace the unpopular Anastasius.¹⁷

They turned to a Germanic military officer, Flavius Areobindus, as his replacement and offered him the diadem.¹⁸ Areobindus fled, accelerating the revolt's collapse, but to end the conflict, Anastasius' niece was wed to Anicius Olybrius, son of the feckless general. The people's offer of the crown to Areobindus, a mid-level general of some skill and bravery, was only tangentially related to his standing in the imperial capital, either among the aristocracy or the masses. Much more significant was his wife, Anicia Juliana, and it was probably in no small part due to her that the military man got the opportunity. Indeed, after Areobindus fled, it was left to the noblewoman to negotiate with Anastasius. As Brian Croke commented upon the accession of Justin in 518: "If his [Justin's] throne was ever to be threatened by anyone...it would be by the royal-blooded descendants of the Theodosian dynasty, namely the family of Anicia Juliana."¹⁹ And indeed, it was the elderly aristocrat and her family Justinian feared most: shortly after his accession in 527, he tried to take a significant portion of her wealth and later in 532 apparently banished her son, Flavius Olybrius, in the wake of the *Nika* rebellion.²⁰

¹⁵ Cf. Premerstein, "Anicia Juliana im Wiener Dioskorides-Kodex" and Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Byzantine Book Illumination*.

¹⁶ Theophanes Confessor, AM 6005; Malalas, *Chronicle*, 406–407.

¹⁷ For an assessment of this rebellion, along with others, see F. Haarer, *Anastasius. Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 46, Cambridge 2006), 145–164.

¹⁸ For Areobindus, see J.R. Martindale, *PRLE* II (Cambridge 1980), 143–144.

¹⁹ Croke, "Justinian under Justin", 1.

²⁰ On Justinian's attempt to gain Anicia's wealth, see Gregory of Tours, *De Glor. Mart.*, ciii; on Anicius Olybrius' recall from banishment, see John Malalas, 478. Martindale, *PRLE* ii, 795, makes the suggestion that Olybrius may have been exiled during the revolt and only recalled him after the dedication of Hagia Sophia, a pointed indication of competition. Harrison, *Excavations at Sarayane in Istanbul*, in his reconstruction considers Polyuktos to be domed, but H. Buchwald, "Saint Sophia, Turning Point in the Development of Byzantine Architecture?", in V. Hoffman (ed.), *Die Hagia*

Now that we have set some of the historical background to the period in which the manuscript was produced, we can turn to the dedicatory image itself. As mentioned above, most scholars agree that the manuscript was published between 512 and 515, thus placing its creation shortly after the riots in Constantinople.²¹ The ostensible dedicators were the people of Honoratae, and their purpose in the dedication was to thank Anicia Juliana for building a church to Mary *Theotokos* in their neighbourhood (a region of the city or perhaps in its suburbs that still remains unidentified).²² The connection between a church consecrated to the Mother of God and a pharmacological text is unclear, but it is worth briefly discussing the *Theotokos* cult in the sixth century.

Since the Councils of Ephesus and later Chalcedon, Mary's place as she who bore the son of God became one of the important fundamentals of christological Orthodoxy. It implied Christ's divine nature and human combined as one, thus implicitly undercutting the Monophysitic position, but also the Diophysite stance of the Nestorians. Given the turbulent disagreements within the Eastern Church about these christologies, Anicia's building project was a loud declaration of her own orthodox Chalcedonianism. Moreover, as Averil Cameron noted some thirty years ago, Mary *Theotokos* in the mid-sixth century emerged as a special protectress of Constantinople and one patronised by emperors and empresses.²³ It may be that this was an early example of her emerging role as a patron saint of the capital city.

With that context, when we look at the actual image, our first consideration should be the text, since it provides direct evidence for the image's purpose. In the illumination's inner octagonal black border, it appears to read: "Hail, o princess, [the community of] Honoratae extols and glorifies you with all fine praises. For magnanimity allows you to be mentioned over the entire world. You belong to the family of the Anicii, and you have built a temple of the Lord, raised high and beautiful."²⁴ The inscription is notable in that it clearly does not emphasise any sort of imperial prerogative or Juliana's Theodosian lineage. Rather, it stresses her connections to the Anician clan and it is not even clear that she is addressed with an imperial title. The text, then, seems to undercut the notion that those responsible for the book – whether with or without Anicia's permission – were implying imperial prerogative.

The imagery itself tells a slightly different story. Anicia's clothing and accoutrements walk a rather fine line. Anicia wears the gold-striated *trabea*, which distinguishes her as a member of the patriciate or perhaps a member of the imperial court. She holds a codicil in

Sophia in Istanbul (Bern 1997), 30–37, casts serious doubts upon this reconstruction. Bardill, "A New Temple for Byzantium", probably makes the most persuasive case for an undomed church.

²¹Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Byzantine Book Illumination*, 61. Von Premerstein argued for a publication date shortly after the dedication of the church precisely *because* of the references in the miniature to the building project: "Anicia Juliana im Wiener Dioskorides-Kodex".

²²On Honoratae's location, see R. McMahon, *Byzantine Art in the Sixth Century and its Aftermath, 527–680* (London 2000), 41–43, and more recently L. Brubaker, "The Vienna Dioscurides and Anicia Juliana," *DOP* 56 (2002), 189–214, suggests Pera, but in private correspondence with me, she has subsequently questioned her own suggestion.

²³Av. Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople. A City Finds its Symbol", *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978), 79–108.

²⁴ΙΟΥ ΔΟΞΑΙΣΙ(Ν ΑΝΑΣΣΑ?)/ΟΝΩΠΑΤ(ΑΙ Σ') Α(ΓΑ)Θ(ΑΙ)Σ Π(Α)Σ(ΑΙ)Σ/ ΥΜΝΟΥΣΙΝ Κ(ΑΙ) ΔΟ(ΞΑΖΟΥ)ΣΙΝ/ΛΑΛΙΣΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΕΙΣ ΠΑΣΑ(Ν) ΓΗΝ/ (Ι)ΗΣ' Η ΜΕΓΑΛΟ(Ψ)ΥΧΙΑ/ΑΝΙΚΗΩΡΩΝ ΓΕΝΟ(Σ) ΠΕΛΕΙΣ/ΝΑΟΝ (ΔΕ) Κ(ΥΡ)ΙΟΥ ΗΓΙΡΑΣ/ΑΝΩ (ΠΡΟΕΚΒ)ΑΝΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΛΟΣ." Translation is a variant of Killerich, "Salomon, jeg har overgået dig!".

her left hand, which, as Pamela Berger notes, implied a conferred honorific.²⁵ Both the diptych of Stilicho and the *missorium* of Theodosius, for example, show a similar scene, with individuals receiving codicils with their left hands. Moreover, Anicia sits on the *sella curulis*, complete with purple cushion, and wears a diadem. The viewer is thus presented with an extraordinarily ambiguous figure. Does her *regalia* suggest a highborn aristocrat or an imperial personage? While her crown and chair suggest an empress – and there are many similar imperial models of this sort – the reception of a codicil implies a subordinate status: codicils of these sorts were granted by emperors (although in this case, one can substitute a divinity instead). Her clothing is moreover gold and not purple, which implies a high, but not highest status. While Killerich has accentuated the imperial components of the image, she has perhaps undervalued the important non-imperial components of her person.

Things are only slightly clearer when we look at the image as a whole. To her right is the personification of Magnanimity (*Megalopsychia*), complete with a sack of gold coins, which Anicia will presumably distribute to a grateful populace of Constantinople. The image finds its analogue in contemporary consular diptychs, although the personification of generosity seems an obvious choice for any depicted act of charity. But *Megalopsychia* was not generosity in a neutral sense: it was intrinsic in those who were of a lordly disposition. *Megalopsychia* was moreover sometimes coupled with the term *euergetis*, thus implying that the virtue had a special association with patronage.²⁶ Moreover, as Killerich has noted, *megalopsychos* was closely associated with Hellenistic ruler cults that carried on into the Roman Empire well into the sixth century.²⁷ On the other hand, the quality also became absorbed into the system of Christian ascetic virtues.²⁸ Was *megalopsychia* an expression of her station or an indication of her Christian qualities?

Anicia is also depicted as a wise benefactor, with a second personified virtue, that of *Phronesis* (Prudence) on her left. The goddess holds up a large *codex*, presumably to show Anicia's learning. It is perhaps significant that Prudence may be honouring the patroness with the gift of the codicil. That would suggest not only Anicia Juliana's native intelligence, but also imply a divine understanding of how to give sagaciously. Her patronage of learning is further discernible as she drops gold coins onto a second *codex* from her right hand. The book is possibly the *Medica Materia*, but more importantly a figure called the Gratitude of the Arts (*Eucharistia technon*) lies prostrate at her feet in thanks. *Eucharistia* and its related verb, *eucharisteo*, often had obvious religious connotations, underscoring a divine virtue in Anicia's generosity.

There is a complicated relationship, here, too, between *Phronesis* and *Sophia*, a word added several centuries later onto the manuscript, and seems to refer to Anicia herself. If we accept that there are visual references to Solomon in the *dedicatio*, then the association of wisdom and rulership becomes clearer. And certainly later images of Solomon have him clothed as a Byzantine emperor, often with a female figure of *Sophia* behind. So it may well be that the implications of *Phronesis* go well beyond divine giving and enter into the imperial.

Finally, in the outer spandrels of the enclosed eight-pointed star framing the portrait, the faded images of *putti* working as labourers, carpenters and stone-masons are still clearly

²⁵ P. Berger, *The Insignia of the "Notitia Dignitatum"* (New York 1981), 175–183. In this circumstance, it could refer to her patriciate status.

²⁶ Polyb. 22:21:3; cf. Dem. Or. 23:205.

²⁷ Killerich, "The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides", 178, noting in the sixth century John Malalas' descriptions of emperors.

²⁸ G. Podskalsky "Virtue", *ODB* 2178; cf. G. Downey, "Personifications of Abstract Ideas in the Antioch Mosaics," *TAPA* 69 (1938), 349–363.

visible.²⁹ Similar images of *putti* can be seen on the walls of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii. Here, they clearly infer Anicia's role as a great builder. To complete the iconography, another *putto*, as the incarnation of the Desire of the Love of Building (*Pothos ton Philoktistou*), hovers in attendance. In many ways, the emphasis on Anicia's building projects is greater than on her other activities: they not only surround and frame Anicia's portrait, but actually interact with the central image. How we interpret this particular component of the image is also decidedly ambiguous. Commissioning churches and other public edifices was a virtue not reserved for emperors. Quite simply, both ruler and aristocrat could fulfil the role of builder, and so, if there was an imperial implication, it is not manifestly clear. Indeed, Sarah Bassett has suggested that it was in fact the prerogative and obligation of the aristocracy of Constantinople to create an adorned city in the fifth and sixth centuries.³⁰

What then can we say about this dedicatory portrait? There are several key points. First, the image, as Killerich and others have argued, has an unmistakable and undeniable iconography consistent with the representation of imperial and royal persons. Particularly her headdress, her seat cushion and the fact that she is ensconced on a throne all suggest the status of an emperor. At least two of the personified virtues around her moreover have close associations with imperial virtues and epithets. Second, however, there is much here that is decidedly non-imperial. The dedicatory text, the reception of the codicil, the noble activities of public building: all of these suggest membership in the aristocracy, albeit Anicia is in the artist's vision an aristocrat without peer. Third, the imagery here is also quite ambiguous – in fact, intentionally so. What do her clothes signify? What about the virtues surrounding her? Can a figure on a throne, wearing a crown, accepting *proskynesis*, not be an emperor? There are simply too many variant readings of what is presented here to state the image is categorically representing either an imperial person or an exemplary member of the nobility.

If we accept, then, that this image is purposefully ambiguous, we must finally ask why. The events of 511 and 512 argue a clear political context. Anicia's family had potentially been a target for extinction or at least punishment in the urban insurrection against Anastasius, but had come out – in theory, at least – in a far stronger political position. Juliana's station, including her imperial connections, could certainly be touted, but only with circumspection. She could also advertise her Orthodoxy in a way that distinguished her from the sitting emperor without directly challenging a constituted authority that she had, through a marriage alliance, committed herself and her household to support. It was no small thing that her son was in line to become the next emperor – something that seemed much more probable in the settlement of 512 than it did several years on. Were Olybrius to succeed the ageing ruler, Anicia would have certainly earned the title of *Augusta*. But even there, she could not advertise these possibilities too prominently: Anastasius also had three competent and experienced nephews who might have succeeded him. She straddled that uncomfortable position between heir and threat, and in a most unusual way.

The ambiguity of the dedication, then, is likely to reflect the unique (or perhaps tenuous?) nature of Anicia and her family's position. The dedication miniature implied much, but dared little. Its audience, whomever they may have been, would have seen and recognised certain imperial echoings, but they would have seen little that explicitly claimed the status or place of an emperor. It walked a fine line between self-aggrandizement and

²⁹ Joseph Mantuani offers the only complete interpretation of their activities; A. von Premerstein et al., (eds), *De Codicis Dioscuridei Aniciae Julianae, nunc Vindobonensis Med. Gr. I. Historia, Scriptura, Picturis* (Leiden 1906), 374–377.

³⁰ S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge 2005).

treason, between aristocratic caprices and imperial prerogative. On the whole, the artist, possibly with Anicia's acquiescence, walked that line fairly well. As she grew more confident in future years, she could and did make her lineage clearer, with the construction of the churches of St. Euphemia, probably in 517 or 518 and St. Polyeuktos in the early 520s.³¹ But in the first months and years after her offer of the throne, she trod with the care of someone who was promised so much.

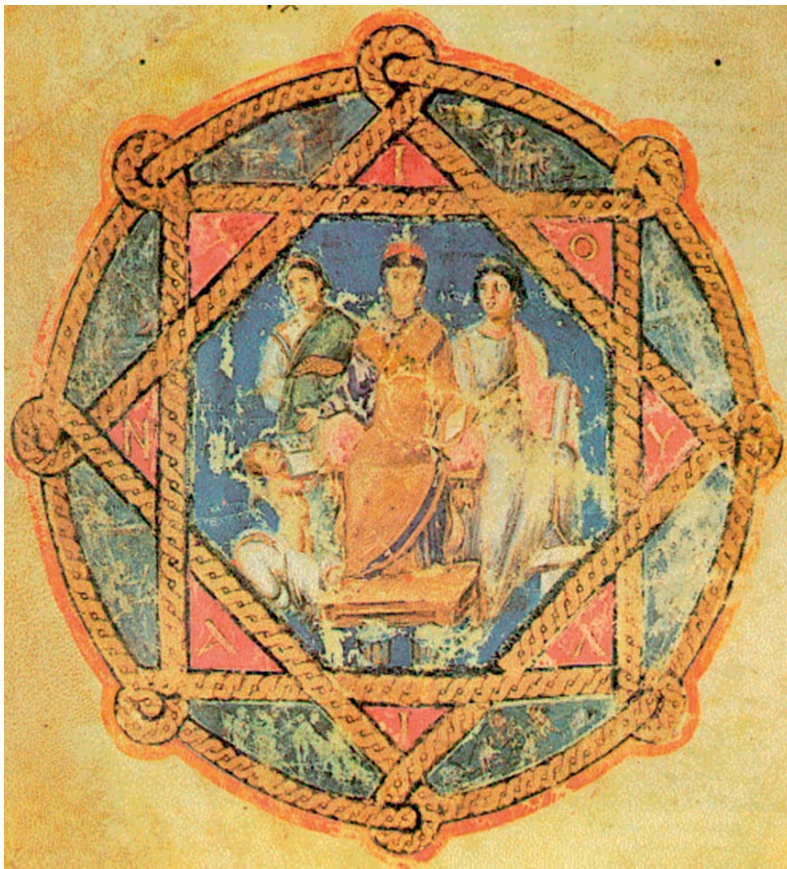


Figure 1: Anicia Juliana, *Vienna Dioscurides* ms. 6 fol. verso

³¹ For the early 520s date instead of the more traditional dates of 524–527, J. Bardill, *Brickstamps of Constantinople* v. 1 (Oxford 2004), 111–116; see also, Nathan, *The Shadow Empress* (Cambridge forthcoming), chapter 5.

Brian Croke

Justinian the “Sleepless Emperor”

The emperor Justinian is usually portrayed as an energetic and active man, forever reforming and reconquering. His reign was the longest of any Roman emperor after that of Augustus and only Basil II would subsequently rival his tenure. In effect, Justinian held imperial power from 525 when he became *Caesar* until his death in November 565, that is, just over forty years. What is less often remarked is that in all those forty years he hardly ever left the imperial palace, let alone Constantinople itself. He reinforced the sedentary model of the early Byzantine emperor, established by Arcadius and Theodosius II a century before. The city was his cosmos, the place where the whole world was concentrated and encapsulated. The emperor never needed to reach out to his empire; it continually came to him. Even though Justinian, like his predecessors, almost never left the imperial city, his contemporaries considered him to be an endlessly busy emperor who was preoccupied day and night with the affairs of empire. He is therefore characterized as the “sleepless emperor”. Indeed, this notion of Justinian as “sleepless” was a virtue consciously created and promoted by emperor and court. In the contemporary propaganda and satire of Justinian’s reign imperial insomnia oscillated between virtue and vice, beginning with Procopius whose picture of Justinian has shaped and coloured all subsequent interpretations from the sixth century to the present, but particularly since the discovery of his *Secret History* in the seventeenth century.

I

That sleeplessness was deliberately cast by Justinian as an imperial virtue, and could be described accordingly, is suggested by the claims of the bureaucrat and courtier John the Lydian. John characterizes Justinian in 551 as “the most indefatigable of all emperors”,¹ and “for the most part keeping tireless vigil against the foe and taking pains to brave the first danger on our behalf”,² and who makes “ceaseless efforts” for the Praetorian Prefecture to which John himself belonged.³ The historian Procopius of Caesarea, by contrast, who may well have been a friend of John, viewed Justinian’s sleeplessness very differently. In the encomiastic context of Procopius’ *Buildings*, his elaborate inventory of the various constructions and reconstructions attributable to Justinian, written in the mid-550s, attention was drawn to the emperor’s austere personal habits. He apologised for them as unbecoming any imperial official, let alone an emperor, because they were not healthy practices.⁴ Clearly for Procopius good governance required a balanced diet and a good night’s sleep. Justinian, however, would rise from his bed “at early dawn and keeping watch over the State, and constantly managing its affairs by word and deed from early dawn to midday and equally into the night. And although he went to his couch late in the night, he immediately rose again, as if he could not endure his bed”.⁵

¹ John Lydus, *De Magistr.* 3.55.1.

² John Lydus, *De Magistr.* 2.15.2.

³ John Lydus, *De Magistr.* 3.39.1.

⁴ Procopius, *Aed.* 1.7.7.

⁵ Procopius, *Aed.* 1.7.8–9.

John the Lydian was possibly one of the first readers of Procopius' *Secret History*,⁶ which is a searing account of the emperor, his wife Theodora and senior officials. In particular, Procopius is more sharply critical of the motive and outcomes of Justinian's sleeplessness. "He was not given to sleep (*ahypnos*) as a general thing",⁷ so Procopius wrote, "and during his two-day fast for Easter the emperor would sleep about one hour, for he made it his task to be constantly awake and to undergo hardships and to labour for no other purpose than to contrive constantly and every day more grievous calamities for his subjects".⁸ Justinian's nocturnal habits are a further subject of Procopius' vitriol in the *Secret History*. He claims to report the gossip of palace insiders that "some of those who were present with the emperor at very late hours of the night presumably and held conferences with him, obviously in the palace, men whose souls were pure, seemed to see a sort of phantom spirit unfamiliar to them in place of him".⁹ Procopius is probably referring here to the testimony of local bishops and theologians who kept the emperor engaged in late night theological discussions. "For one of these asserted", so Procopius continues, "that he would rise suddenly from the imperial throne and walk up and down there...and the head of Justinian would disappear suddenly, but the rest of his body seemed to keep making these same long circuits...Later, however, when his head had returned to the body he thought to his surprise that he could fill out that which a moment before had been lacking." Procopius admits that this gruesome reportage is only hearsay and then proceeds to add that someone else who stood beside the emperor saw his face become just a mass of flesh before the facial features reappeared.¹⁰ Next he adds the story of a monk who came to see Justinian but refused to proceed to his audience because he saw not an emperor seated on the throne but "the Lord of the Demons".¹¹ "And how could this man fail to be some wicked demon", Procopius concludes, "he who never had a sufficiency of food or drink or sleep but walked about the palace at unreasonable hours of the night".¹²

There is yet more. Procopius goes so far as to report the gossip that Justinian's mother once confided that her son was not the offspring of her husband Sabbatius but of a demon. When she was conceiving Justinian, she believed she was having intercourse with a demon who quickly disappeared, as in a dream.¹³ The demonic emperor became a recurrent explanatory motif for Procopius.¹⁴ It is even cited to explain natural disasters.¹⁵ Subsequently, Procopius' relentless and demonic characterisation of the ascetic and sleepless Justinian has seeped, however unconsciously, into most of the modern literature on the emperor. Discounting the rhetoric of demonology, Justinian becomes the ageing and incurable insomniac, bad-tempered, despotic and out of touch because of lack of sleep. For Justinian's critical contemporaries and occasional courtiers such as Procopius sleeplessness would appear to be an unnatural imperial vice.

⁶ As argued by A. Kaldellis, "Identifying Dissident Circles in Sixth-Century Byzantium: The Friendship of Prokopios and Ioannes Lydos", *Florilegium* 21 (2004), 11.

⁷ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 13.28.

⁸ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 13.32; cf. *Aed.* 1.7.5.

⁹ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 12.25.

¹⁰ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 12.23.

¹¹ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 12.26.

¹² Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 12.27.

¹³ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 12.18–19.

¹⁴ Relevant commentary and elucidation in Averil Cameron, *Procopius* (London 1985), 56–57 and D. Brodka, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie* (Frankfurt 2004), 35–39.

¹⁵ Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 18.1–4, 36, 37.

II

Sleeplessness, more positively “*Vigilantia*”, had never been one of the canonical imperial virtues although individual emperors such as Trajan could be so described by their panegyrists.¹⁶ Justinian, however, appropriated the notion of sleeplessness and vigilance as an imperial virtue and it recurs throughout his reign. The earliest instance is to be found in an inscription in the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople which was built by Justinian in the mid-520s just as he was coming to the throne. Carved into the decoration of the church, for all to see forever after, was a key phrase the new emperor chose to describe himself – “sleepless emperor” (βασιλῆος ἀκοιμήτοιο).¹⁷ Justinian is here advertising his vigilance. This essential self-conscious attribute later appears in many of Justinian’s laws. For instance, in launching the publication of his new legal textbook, the *Institutes*, in November 534 it was noted that Justinian’s industrious oversight (“*summis vigiliis*”) enabled the project to be brought to completion. Moreover, it is clear that most of the work was done by the leading lawyers Tribonian, Theophilus and Dorotheus. Once they had drafted the work, however, Justinian read it carefully and issued it with the full force of an imperial law.¹⁸

The prefaces to Justinian’s laws, especially the more fully preserved *Novels*, show the emperor regularly reminding the Romans that his toil is unceasing on their behalf:

We pass entire days and nights in reflecting upon what may be agreeable to God and beneficial to Our subjects, and it is not in vain that We maintain these vigils, but We employ them in attempting to deliver those who are subject to Our government from care and anxiety; and, undertaking this Ourselves, We attempt, in every way, to do what may render Our people happy and relieve them of all onerous charges and impositions, with the exception of duties and taxes.¹⁹

Here again the sense of endless energy and vigilance is emphasized, together with the implication of sleeplessness (“days and nights”). In another law directed to reforming the habits of the gardeners of Constantinople, Justinian makes clear that he cannot afford to be distracted by frivolous or insubstantial matters, given the sheer volume of imperial business:

We desire that, by means of this Imperial pragmatic sanction – the execution of which is entrusted to Your Excellency – We may, in the future, remain without annoyance from complaints of this description, and that such cares may not distract Our attention from other things connected with the government of the Empire. For there is no part of the administration of either great or small importance which does not demand Our attention; We perceive

¹⁶ A. Wallace-Hadrill, “The Emperor and his Virtues”, *Historia* 30 (1981), 298–323.

¹⁷ Text of the inscription in S.G. Mercati, “Epigraphica, II: Sulla tradizione manoscritta dell’iscrizione del fregio dei santi Sergio e Bacco di Costantinopoli”, *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, ser. 3, Rendiconti* 3 (1925), 205 which improves on the more accessible G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca* (1888, rp. Hildesheim 1965), 1064 (478). For the date and context, see B. Croke, “Justinian, Theodora and the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus”, *DOP* 60 (2006), 25–63.

¹⁸ Justinian, *Institutes*, Praef.

¹⁹ Justinian, *Novel* 8, praef. (535) (trans. S.P. Scott [Cincinnati 1932]), cf. similar sentiments in *Novels* 46 (537), 80 (539), 81 (539), 86 (539), 93 (539) and 114 (541).

everything with Our mind and Our eyes, and We do not desire anything to remain neglected, confused, or ambiguous.²⁰

Once more, Justinian assures his subjects that no matter is too small for his attention and that he is fully immersed in the business of the court.

Similarly, Justinian in September 535 established the new position of "Prefect of the People" (*praetor plebis*). In the preamble to his statute, the emperor explained that there used to be a position called "Prefect of the Night Watch" (*praefectus vigilum*) who was responsible for maintaining law and order in the darkness hours. However, this position has become redundant since its functions are just as necessary by day as by night and there was conflict between the different magistrates responsible separately for the day and for the night. So he blurs the distinction, noting that he has "come to the conclusion that this public employment should be entirely recreated, and committed to persons who may administer it without any reference to their nocturnal duties; for they shall hereafter have jurisdiction by day as well as by night".²¹

In addition to the emperor's own laws, Justinian's perpetual watchfulness was also reflected in the advice given to him early in his reign by the deacon, Agapetus. Writing sometime in the 530s, he exhorted Justinian on how to be a good ruler. One way, among many other things, was to be "like a helmsman". Agapetus goes on to explain what he meant by this phrase, namely that "the many-eyed intellect of the emperor remains ever vigilant (*agrypnei*), holding secure the rudder of good government and firmly pushing back the torrents of lawlessness..."²² Later on, reinforcing the emperor's claim in addressing the peccadilloes of Constantinople's gardeners quoted above, he advises Justinian that no issue is too small to warrant his attention: "you will best administer your good kingship if you strive to oversee everything and allow nothing to escape notice. For there is nothing small for you, however small it appears in comparison with your affairs".²³

III

By Justinian's time, being sleepless evoked significant spiritual power and virtue. Moreover, Agapetus might have been hinting at that when addressing Justinian. It seems likely that Agapetus was somehow connected to the Stoudios monastery of St John the Baptist founded at Constantinople by the 460s, where there were the famous "sleepless monks" (*akoimetoï*) who prayed and sang psalms in at least Greek, Latin and Syriac in rostered eight-hour shifts, thereby ensuring that some monks were at prayer in each language every minute of every day.²⁴ The "sleepless emperor" of the Sergius and Bacchus inscription inevitably invites comparison with the "sleepless monks". By Justinian's day the "Sleepless Monks" came to be publicly renowned as powerful supporters of orthodoxy so that an emperor who originally portrayed himself as both orthodox and sleepless (*akoimētos*) would benefit from being so overtly associated with them.²⁵ Over time, however, Justinian came to strongly oppose these monks.

²⁰ Justinian, *Novel* 64 (trans. Scott).

²¹ Justinian, *Novel* 13.1 (trans. Scott).

²² Agapetus, *Advice to the Emperor Justinian*, 2 (trans. P.N. Bell, *Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian* [Liverpool 2009], 100).

²³ Agapetus, *Advice to the Emperor Justinian*, 26 (trans. Bell, 108).

²⁴ Bell, *Three Political Voices*, 9.

²⁵ R. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office*, rev.ed. (Collegeville, MN 1993), 171–174.

Meanwhile, in a law designed to upgrade and enforce monastic discipline in Constantinople and elsewhere in 539, the emperor noted that monks could be supervised all day and all night because in monasteries some monks would always be awake while others were sleeping. Their main function, however, was to pray but for their prayers to be effective they needed to be virtuous, pious and averse to the slightest temptation. If so, Justinian continues, “there is no doubt that Our armies will be victorious, and Our cities well governed; for where God is appeased and favorably disposed towards Us, why should not We enjoy universal peace and the devotion of Our subjects? The earth offers Us its fruits, the sea gives Us up its wealth, and the prayers of Our people will invoke the blessing of God upon the entire Empire”.²⁶

Another aspect of watchfulness and sleeplessness evident in the time of Justinian was the way the night-time hours were increasingly claimed not just for monastic prayer in the case of the “Sleepless Monks”, but also for public prayer and liturgy, including outdoor processions. The role of the all night vigil (*agrypnia*) had expanded well beyond its introduction at Constantinople in the fourth century. In Justinian’s day there were night vigils for the eve of Easter and many other key feasts including those for local saints. The contemporary hymns of Romanos illustrate the role and nature of the night vigils, as well as how they involve the congregation inside and outside churches.²⁷ Being sleepless meant not only being prayerful but also being vigilant, the capacity to keep watch especially in the darkness hours. The laws of Justinian demonstrate this trait overtly. His vigilance was a positive attribute. Indeed, *vigilantia* was a useful asset for an emperor and in Justinian’s case his reputation for watchfulness was reinforced by a family name. He was vigilant by blood as well as by habit. His mother was called *Vigilantia* and so was his sister, the mother of his successor Justin II. Another relative of Justinian may have been the *comes domesticorum* *Vigilantius*.²⁸ As head of the palace guard and a close associate of the emperor it is very likely that *Vigilantius* was a trusted ally of the emperor. That this family association with vigilance and watchfulness was highlighted by Justinian and his panegyrists is evident from the way it is exploited by the African poet Corippus in his treatment of *Vigilantia*, the mother of the emperor Justin II. In fact, Corippus invests Justin with the same Justinianic virtue of vigilance and links it to a traditional motif of the sleeplessness of the poet himself.²⁹ “*Vigilantia*” and “*Sapientia*”, otherwise *Sophia* the wife of Justin, are cited by Corippus as the inspiration for his poem. In fact, they may have been his principal informants on the events he describes inside the palace.³⁰ By casting himself as sleepless, Justinian turned vigilance into a virtue, a necessary attribute of a caring, prayerful and watchful emperor.

IV

The “watchful ruler” was a literary and political type that could be traced back to Homer³¹ and, in the Roman tradition, to Vergil’s *Aeneas*,³² who was perhaps also reflecting the

²⁶ Justinian, *Novel* 133.5 (trans. Scott).

²⁷ G. Frank, “Romanos and the Night Vigil in the Sixth Century”, in D. Krueger (ed.), *A People’s History of Christianity*, vol. 3: *Byzantine Christianity* (Minneapolis 2006), 59–78.

²⁸ Proposed in *PLRE* 3.1376 s.v. “*Vigilantius*”.

²⁹ Corippus, *In laudem Justinii*, pr. 21ff and 1.8ff, with M. Dewar, “Corippus on the Wakefulness of Poets and Emperors”, *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993), 211–223.

³⁰ L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204* (London 1999), 41.

³¹ Homer, *Il.* 9.9 ff.

³² Vergil, *Aen.* 1.305.

emperor Augustus – a ruler available to sign a letter at any time of day or night.³³ While panegyrists such as Pliny (second century) and Mamertinus (fourth century) could laud the vigilance of the emperors Trajan and Julian respectively, Justinian was evidently the first emperor to describe himself as “sleepless” and to publicise the virtue. His model may have been that of the sleepless monks in the Stoudios monastery so that, just as the sleepless monks were perpetually at prayer on behalf of God’s people, Justinian promoted the notion of an emperor perpetually at work for the benefit of his subjects.

What Justinian’s widespread promotion of his imperial vigilance enabled Procopius to do was to deliberately invert its value and meaning. As with so much of the *Secret History*, Procopius turned an imperial Christian virtue on its head, transforming it into a demonic vice.³⁴ So, in the *Secret History* the vigilant and sleepless Justinian became a figure of derision and scorn, whereas for John the Lydian the emperor Justinian hardly ever slept because he was being forever vigilant and hard working for his courtiers and his people, the very model of a “sleepless emperor”. Whether true or not, this contemporary idea of the ever watchful emperor implied that Justinian worked long hours and slept little. He probably did.

³³ Suetonius, *Aug.* 50.

³⁴ A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia 2004), 155–156.

Sarah Gador-Whyte

Procopius and Justinian's Propaganda

“With God as authority, we, governing our empire, which has been entrusted to us by the heavenly majesty, carry out wars successfully and adorn peace and uphold the condition of the state.”¹ So begins the Emperor Justinian's Preface to the *Digests*. Similarly, in the Preface to the *Institutes* he says “...and so Africa, as other innumerable provinces, having been added, after so great an extent of time, by our victories [which have been] granted by the heavenly will, again bears witness to Roman sway and to our authority.”² Throughout his legal writings, Justinian ran the same line of propaganda: that the wars against Persians, Vandals and Goths (and more particularly the successes in these wars) were ordained by God. This paper will argue that the sixth-century historian Procopius used a competing conception of divine agency in his history of the wars to counter Justinian's claims. My argument focuses on the historian's use of the term τύχη (hereafter *tyche*), which is often translated as ‘chance’ or ‘fortune’. I argue that *tyche* is compatible with the Christian God in Procopius' *Wars* against the recent scholarship of Anthony Kaldellis.

Tyche covers three conceptual categories in the *Wars*: chance, a contingent situation, and a divine being. These conceptual categories map roughly onto different philological categories: definite *tyche*, indefinite *tyche*, *tyche tis*. My analysis of Procopius' linguistic usage of *tyche* shows that *tyche* only refers to a divine being when it appears with the definite article: ἡ τύχη. This does not mean that every instance of *tyche* with the definite article refers to a divine agent. Occasionally, definite *tyche* is used to mean contingency.³ I have made the distinction between ‘chance’ and ‘divine agent’ on the basis of context and verb type. Verbs which have an impersonal sense (it happened, X brought it about that...) do not indicate divine agency, but chance. More active and personal verbs signify a divine agent. So *tyche* (preceded by the definite article) is a deity who should be worshipped or blamed for the outcome of events (I.24.28), who has the ability to get jealous (VI.8.1), and who decides how events will turn out (II.9.13 and *passim*). When the definite article is not used – *tyche* stands alone or goes with an indefinite article: for example, phrases like *tyche tis* (‘a certain *tyche*’) – Procopius uses the term without referring to a divine agent. Indefinite *tyche* most often refers to a contingent situation (usually bad)

ὁ δὲ Περόζη ἐς ὄψιν ἐλθὼν τύχην μὲν τὴν παροῦσαν ὡς ἥκιστα ἀπεκάλυπεν.

And he [Eusebius], going before the face of Perozes, as little as possible revealed the present situation. (I.3.13)

¹ Deo auctore nostrum gubernantes imperium, quod nobis a caelesti maiestate traditum est, et bella feliciter peragimus et pacem decoramus et statum rei publicae sustentamus: *Pref.*, P. Krueger and T. Mommsen (eds), *Digesta* (Berlin 1870). All translations are my own.

² ...et tam Africa quam aliae innumerosae provinciae post tanta temporum spatia nostris victoriis a caelesti numine praestitis iterum dicioni Romanae nostroque additae imperio protestantur: *Pref. Institutes* 1 (J.A.C. Thomas (ed.), *The Institutes of Justinian: Text, Translation, and Commentary* [Cape Town 1975]). I have also consulted Krueger (ed.), *Institutiones* (Berlin 1870).

³ See, for example, I.14.22 and I.25.4

Here Eusebius reveals the terrible state of affairs to Perozes indirectly (through a fable which follows this passage) because of his fear of the Persian ruler.

Tyche tis, on the other hand, generally refers to chance or luck and is used when the causes are uncertain or irrelevant

οὐκ ἐξεπίτηδες μέντοι αὐτῷ πεποίηται τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ τις τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ξυνέβη
τύχη πᾶσαν ἀνασωσαμένῳ τὴν νῆσον Ῥωμαίοις ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐς τὰς
Συρακούσας ἐσεληλακέναι.

This was not, however, intentionally arranged by him [i.e., Belisarius], but some chance brought it about for the man that, having recovered the whole island for the Romans, on that day [i.e., the last day of his consulship] he entered Syracuse.
(V.5.19)

In this passage, *tyche* does not cause Belisarius to enter Syracuse on the last day of his consulship. This event was caused by any number of other things with which Procopius is not concerned. His emphasis is on the general's good fortune and hero-like reception rather than the various possible causes of the event. Both this meaning and that of 'contingent situation' suggest that Procopius did not see historical events as entirely determined.

But this paper focuses on Procopius' use of *tyche* with the definite article. While the other two uses of *tyche* have clear parallels in classical models such as Thucydides and Polybius, the final category, that of a divine being, is the one which sets Procopius apart from many of his models. Definite *Tyche* acts in the *Wars* as a supernatural agent which decides the outcome of events.⁴ This is a significant departure from the historical tradition, prominent in Thucydides, that a historian should look for human causes for events. Thucydides uses *tyche* causally only for events beyond human control (such as weather),⁵ and non-causally to mean a contingent event – often an event which is not predictable to one party.⁶ Although he similarly disapproves of non-human causation in history (XXXVI.17.2, 4), Polybius (unlike Thucydides) does personify *tyche* at some points in his history. Yet it is far from clear whether Polybius actually believes in a divine agent who controls events. He is much more concerned than Thucydides was with presenting moral lessons for his readers, and seems to see the personification of *tyche* as an appropriate tool to further this aim.⁷ But Procopius' divine *tyche* definitely interferes in human affairs. It causes quarrels and brings about triumphs and defeats (for example, VI.8.1).

⁴ All following references to *tyche* in Procopius refer to definite *tyche* unless otherwise stated.

⁵ For example, 3.49.4.

⁶ For example, at 2.87.2–3 the Peloponnesians mistakenly attribute defeat to *tyche* instead of *technē*; see also L. Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975), 181–183. For Thucydides' rationalist view of history, see J.H. Finley, *Thucydides* (Cambridge, Mass. 1942), esp. 313. On Thucydides' use of *tyche* to mean chance, see Edmunds, 175. On the contingency of events in Thucydides, see M. Cogan, *The Human Thing: the Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History* (Chicago 1981), 174–178; Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides*, 175; V. Hunter, "Change in Thucydides' *History*: Cause, Process and Agency", *Clio* 13 (1984), 76.

⁷ See F.W. Walbank, "Polybius", in T.A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Historians* (London 1966), 46–47. Polybius employs qualifiers like ὥσπερ when talking about the personified *tyche*, which makes his belief in this divine agent even more unlikely (for instance, II.20.7 and XX.7.2); Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford 1957), 25. For Polybius' use of *tyche* more generally, see *idem*, *Historical Commentary*, 16–26 and *Polybius* (Berkeley 1972), esp. 60–65.

So what sort of divine being is this *tyche*? Averil Cameron has argued that it refers to the Christian God.⁸ This argument has much to recommend it, as we will see. Anthony Kaldellis has recently argued against this interpretation in favour of the pagan goddess Fortune on the grounds that *tyche* in the *Wars* appears capricious, jealous, angry and vindictive.⁹ Perhaps assuming some sort of modern liberal theology, Kaldellis argues that the apparently capricious way in which *tyche* acts in the *Wars* is inconsistent with the Christian God.¹⁰ But Kaldellis' argument may be contested in two main ways. Firstly, he has not taken into account the way in which the Christian God was seen by many sixth-century Byzantine Christians: as one who actively enacts divine justice. Malalas, for instance, talks about earthquakes as 'the wrath of God' and the plague as God's punishment of increasingly sinful Constantinopolitans¹¹

ἰδὼν δὲ κύριος ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἐπληθύνθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐπήγαγε
πτῶσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἰς ἐξάλειψιν ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ ἐν ταῖς
χώραις.

And the Lord God, seeing that transgressions of humans had multiplied,
brought about a calamity for humans on the earth: destruction in all the cities
and the lands. (18.92)

Similarly, in his hymn *On Earthquakes and Fires* Romanos the Melode explains the Nika riot as God's punishment of an unrepentant populace¹²

Μίαν δευτέραν τὴν πληγὴν ὁ κτίστης ἐπιφέρων, ἀνθρώπους δὲ εὐρίσκων |
κρείττους μὴ γινομένους, ἀλλὰ καὶ χεῖρους ἐαυτῶν...¹³

The Creator imposed a second disaster, since he found men were not better,
but even worse than themselves [*i.e.*, than they had been]... (54. 18'. 1–2)

Both these authors see the Christian God as an active agent in current events, who ruthlessly punishes wrong-doing in a way, which may seem angry and capricious to modern readers. In this way their divine agents display characteristics which are similar to those of Procopius' *tyche*. Yet neither Romanos nor Malalas (both contemporaries of Procopius) saw God's actions as capricious, but rather as just and righteous in the face of a sinful and faithless humanity. Neither author was constrained by classicising style or genre and they are here used as examples of the views of the wider populace.

Secondly, Kaldellis has failed to realise that the so-called capriciousness of *tyche* is no more than Procopius' own lack of comprehension of divine purpose.¹⁴ Like Malalas and

⁸ A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London 1985), 118–119.

⁹ A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia 2004), esp. 172, 206.

¹⁰ Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea*, 206.

¹¹ I have adopted the numbering system created by Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys and Roger Scott in their translation of the chronicle and subsequently adopted in Hans Thurn's Greek edition for CFHB. See *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne 1986); *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, ed. H. Thurn (Berlin 2000).

¹² See also A. Varghese, "Kaiserkritik in Two Kontakia of Romanos", in J. Burke, U. Betka, P. Buckley, K. Hay, Scott & A. Stephenson (eds), *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott* (Melbourne 2006), 393–403.

¹³ The edition used is Romanos, *Cantica*, eds. P. Maas and K. Trypanis (Oxford 1963), 467.

Romanos, Procopius realises he cannot hope completely to understand divine action. In a similar way, he shies away from discussing the nature of God because it is comprehensible.¹⁵ Humans are not capable of full understanding of the divine plan. Then, as now, one popular theological response to the charge of apparently harsh divine actions was that God is always just, but humans do not have the divine providential wisdom necessary fully to comprehend the workings of divine providence. Thus, nothing *tyche* does in the *Wars* is inconsistent with sixth-century views about how God acts. Kaldellis is wrong to argue that it is proof of the author's paganism. So why does Procopius mostly use *tyche* instead of *theos*? Procopius is constrained by genre and the attractiveness of self-preservation. Genre has given him *tyche* as the only appropriate term to discuss non-human causation, so he takes this classical term and employs it for the Christian God, which also enables him to veil his criticisms of Justinian's propaganda.

As we have seen above, Justinian claims that Roman victories over their various opponents were given by God, throughout the legal writings of the period.¹⁶ There is a very strong emphasis on divine agency in human affairs, the wars in particular, and a lessening of human agency. We should remember that during Justinian's reign, these prefaces would have been published throughout the Empire, and read in public places (*Nov.* 1 Epilogue 1; *Nov.* 8 Epilogue).¹⁷ They therefore formed an important part of the imperial propaganda that tried to shape contemporary feeling towards the actions and achievements of empire and emperor. They are a crucial mechanism by which Justinian could act in the political realm to secure allegiance to himself and the imperial machine.¹⁸

Justinian is not at all unusual in ascribing victories to God, or in suggesting a close connection between himself and God. He is, in fact, in good company with both Christian and pagan rulers before him. Constantine the Great claimed that the cross of Christ brought him victory.¹⁹ Augustus attributed his victory at Actium to the god Apollo.²⁰ Augustus was

¹⁴ Downey rightly points this out, using Augustine as a comparison; see G. Downey, "Paganism and Christianity in Procopius", *Church History* 18 (1949), 94–95. See also M. Whitby, "Religious Views of Procopius and Agathias", in D. Brodka and M. Stachura (eds), *Continuity and Change: Studies in Late Antique Historiography* (Electrum 13, 2007), 85, who likewise accepts that Procopius' incomprehension (in relation to the destruction of Antioch) is entirely Christian, although he phrases it in terms of the supremacy of God and random nature of human fortune rather than the incomprehensibility of God's purpose.

¹⁵ See Whitby, "Religious Views of Procopius and Agathias", 79–80.

¹⁶ Pazdernik also suggests that Justinian used legislation to construct a portrait of himself and his regime, and that this portrayal "radiated utter self-assurance": C.F. Pazdernik, "Justinianic Ideology and the Power of the Past", in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge 2005), 191–193. In the same work, see also Maas, "Roman Questions, Byzantine Answers", esp. 6–7. Victories were also connected to the Emperor's piety. Although writing centuries after our period, Theophanes exemplifies this in his addition of "being pious and orthodox" (εὐσεβὴς ὢν καὶ ὁρθόδοξος) as the reason for Theodosius' victory in Thrace (AM 5871: *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor [Leipzig 1883]). Mango and Scott point out that this is an addition from Theophanes' source: Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284–813*, trans. C. Mango & Scott (Oxford 1997), 101–102, n.1.

¹⁷ R. Scott, "Malalas and Justinian's Codification", in E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys & A. Moffatt (eds), *Byzantine Papers* (Canberra 1981), 17–19.

¹⁸ Scott, "Malalas and Justinian's Codification", 13–14.

¹⁹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 1.28–31 (see Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, ed. F. Winkelmann [Berlin 1975] and Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. A. Cameron & S.G. Hall [Oxford 1999]). An alternative account can be found in Lactantius, *DMP* 44.5–9. For an analysis of the differences between the two accounts, see R.M. Price, "*In hoc signo vinces*: The Original Context of the Vision

deified (posthumously),²¹ and Eusebius linked Constantine with the Divine Logos.²² These earlier attempts by emperors to link their activities to some sort of divinity provide a discursive foundation which strengthens Justinian's own attempts to draw on divine support.²³

By subtly aligning *tyche* with the Christian God, Procopius undermines Justinian's claims that God is working for him against Roman enemies. Evidence from each of the *Wars* will be analysed in turn.

Persian Wars

In Book II of the *Persian Wars*, referring to the accession of Chosroes, Procopius writes

βουλομένη γάρ τινα μέγαν ἀεὶ ποιεῖν ἢ τύχη πράσσει τοῖς καθήκουσι χρόνοις τὰ δόξαντα, οὐδενὸς τῇ ῥύμῃ τῆς βουλῆσεως ἀντιστατοῦντος, οὔτε τὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διασκοπούμενη ἀξίωμα ... οὐδὲ ἄλλο τῶν πάντως οὐδὲν ἐν νῶ ποιούμενη, ἣν τὸ δόξαν αὐτῇ περαίνοιτο μόνον.

For, each time it wishes to make someone great, *tyche* does the things it has decided upon at the proper times, with no one resisting the force of its decision, neither considering the honour of a man ... nor does it take anything else into consideration at all, as long as it accomplishes the one thing which has been decided upon by it. (II.9.13)

In this passage, Procopius uses *tyche* in a situation and manner foreign to Justinian. It is contrary to Justinian's propaganda to suggest that a divine being is working for the Persian king. The accession of the Persian ruler would only occasion the use of *tyche* in Justinian's eyes if *tyche* meant simply 'chance'. But *tyche* does not merely mean 'chance' here. Rather, it does things and decides things; its power is far greater than the human power that it imperiously disregards. *Tyche* is a divine agent who decides upon events and who has, in this particular case, decided to place Chosroes in control of the Persian kingdom. There are human causes for this event as well, which are also described by Procopius at II.9.12: his eldest brother Caoses was hated by his father, and his other brother Zames was one-eyed and so unable to rule. So Procopius does not use *tyche* because he is unaware of other causes. He appears to be countering Justinian's world-view, which stated that God was working for himself and the Roman Empire.

There is also a second level of criticism operating in this passage. Throughout the *Persian Wars*, Procopius sets up a comparison between Justinian and Chosroes.²⁴ The

of Constantine", in K. Cooper & J. Gregory (eds), *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church* (Woodbridge 2005), 2–5.

²⁰ See A. Gosling, "Octavian, Brutus and Apollo: A Note on Opportunist Propaganda", *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986), esp. 587.

²¹ J.B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden 2007), 149–150; Rives also points out that only Caligula and Commodus demanded deification while alive (at 150).

²² *Vita Const.* IV.71–2; F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background* (Washington 1966), 617–618. See also D.M. Nicol, "Byzantine Political Thought", in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought* (Cambridge 1988), 51–52.

²³ For this general trend from the early empire onwards, and the change in religion and political ideology from the republic to the early empire, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford 1979), 198–200.

²⁴ Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, 62–63, 143, 247.

identification of the two rulers means that a strong criticism of Justinian is embedded in the criticism of the Persian king. Not only is Chosroes unworthy of his position, but Justinian himself has similarly been exalted beyond his talents and deserts. There is not simply a two-fold criticism of Justinian in this passage, however, but also a two-fold concealment. Procopius has used Chosroes to veil his criticism of Justinian. He has used the word *tyche* for the same purpose, since it allows for the ambiguity of referent discussed earlier. *Tyche* in this passage is therefore a clever device for both criticism and concealment, since its appropriateness in a classicizing history shields the author from a correct interpretation of his motives in using it.²⁵

There is one passage in the *Persian Wars* in which *tyche* appears to work for Justinian instead of against him. In Book I, the senator Origenes advises against the rebellion

ἦν μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὸν πολέμιον ἴοιμεν, ἐπὶ ξυροῦ μὲν ἀκμῆς τὰ πράγματα ἡμῖν
στήσετα, περὶ δὲ τῶν ὅλων ἐν βραχεὶ διακινδυνεύσομεν χρόνῳ, τῶν δὲ
ἀποβήσεσθαι μελλόντων ἔνεκα τὴν τύχην ἢ προσκυνήσομεν ἢ μεμψόμεθα
πάντως. τὰ γὰρ τῶν πραγμάτων ὀξύτατα ἐς τὸ τῆς τύχης ὥς τὰ πολλὰ
περιίσταται κράτος.

Therefore, if we go out against the enemy, our affairs will stand on a razor's edge, and we will quickly bring everything into danger, and as a result of how things turn out, we shall either worship *tyche* or blame it altogether. For events which are concluded quickly fall, for the most part, into the power of *tyche*.
(I.24.28–9)

Origenes' advice is ignored, and the hasty plan of those rebelling fails. Justinian benefits from the haste of the crowd, which Origenes places within the auspice of the divine being, *tyche*. This seems to fit with Justinian's propaganda. The divine agent worked in the Emperor's favour against his enemies. But Procopius has an explanation for this one instance of divine favour. He has placed Origenes in the position of the wise adviser in this passage. In the pattern of Herodotus,²⁶ the wise adviser is right and is ignored. It is only because of the faults of the crowd, and not because of the good qualities of Justinian, that *tyche* works for the emperor. In this way (and those we have seen above), *tyche* as a divine agent in the *Persian Wars* acts as a counterbalance to Justinian's propaganda by undermining his belief that the divine historical agent works for him above other rulers.

Vandal Wars

Procopius saw the war against the Vandals as disastrous. Clearly it was not possible for him to assert this belief openly, so he uses a literary allusion. Once again, as Roger Scott has pointed out, Procopius employs Herodotus and the wise adviser.²⁷ The scene in which John the Cappadocian advises Justinian not to go to war against the Vandals (III.10.7–21) is reminiscent of book VII sections 10–18 in Herodotus' *Histories*. In this passage, it is

²⁵ Evans suggests that in general Procopius' "classicizing mask" would have been useful for veiling criticism: J.A.S. Evans, "The Attitude of the Secular Historians of the Age of Justinian towards the Classical Past", *Traditio* 32 (1976), 358.

²⁶ Herodotus, VII.10–18. According to Lattimore's classifications, Origenes would be a "tragic warner"; see R. Lattimore, "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus", *Classical Philology* 34 (1939), 24. On wise advisers in Herodotus, see also H.R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland 1966), 74–75. Also see below.

²⁷ R. Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography", in M. Mullett and R. Scott (eds), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham 1981), 73–74.

Artabanus who advises Xerxes against war with the Greeks, and eventually convinces him. Xerxes and Artabanus are then convinced by dreams (VII.12, 14, 17) that the war is divinely ordained and Athens set for destruction (VII.18). The similarities between the two passages, especially between the speeches of the two advisers, are quite marked. Both speeches open with ὃ βασιλεῦ (*Hist.* VII.10, *Wars* III.10.8), and begin with justifications for speaking contrary to the ruler's opinions. In both passages, there is the fear of failure based on a previous defeat by the same enemy, and both rulers decide to go against the advice of the wise adviser figure because of a dream. In Herodotus, the wise adviser is proved right by the course of events and the dream proved wrong. The war against Athens is a disaster.²⁸ Unlike Herodotus, Procopius was writing under the ruler whose wars he was recording. He was therefore unable to make overtly negative comments about the Emperor or the war.²⁹ But the implication of Procopius' reference to this passage of Herodotus is that Justinian is wrong to go against John's advice, and that this war will also be a disaster.³⁰ Although reference to the on-going rebellions after the initial capture of Carthage (IV.1.3–11, IV.4.1–12, IV.14.7–42) and problems with the Moors (IV.8.20, IV.10–13) does suggest that the invasion was far from successful, Procopius is not (and cannot be) explicit. So a correct interpretation of the Herodotean allusion is essential for understanding Procopius' view of the war.

Given that Procopius sees the war against the Vandals as a disaster, he has no problem in attributing individual successes to *tyche*, a divine being subtly identified with the Christian God. Justinian declared that God was giving him victory in these wars. Procopius suggests that God, although granting particular small victories, is overall creating disaster and failure for Justinian and the Empire. So Belisarius' capture of and triumphant entry into Carthage happens quickly and apparently without much difficulty. This one victory becomes insignificant in comparison with the mutinies by Roman soldiers, further battles with Vandals, and increasingly frequent attacks by Moors. Arguably God would have served the Romans better if he had prevented the entry into Carthage.

A secondary motive for Procopius' use of *tyche* in this way is to reduce the agency of the general Belisarius and, by extension, Justinian. By attributing the so-called successes of the Roman army to the supernatural agent rather than the general, Procopius emasculates Belisarius.³¹ This characterisation of Belisarius as weak, effeminate and ineffectual also reflects badly on Justinian. Since Justinian does not go on the campaigns, Belisarius is

²⁸ See, for example, Aeschylus' *Persae*, which dramatizes Xerxes' return following his defeat. It is interesting to note that Aeschylus places much more emphasis on the impious nature of Xerxes' attempt to bridge the Hellespont than Herodotus does (e.g., *Persae* 743–750); S. Scullion, "Herodotus and Greek Religion", in C. Dewald & J. Marincola (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge 2006), 194.

²⁹ Greatrex rightly points out that Procopius was unusual in living and writing only under the one emperor. He did not, therefore, have the freedom of other historians (like Agathias) to criticize Justinian's regime: G. Greatrex, "Procopius the Outsider?", in D.C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1998), 220.

³⁰ Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography", 73–74. *Pace* Averil Cameron Procopius' own dream, which he records at III.12.3–5, is proof that he did not disapprove of the war with the Vandals. At this point Procopius is merely including himself amongst those who were at first deceived by the dreams (but later disillusioned, at least in Procopius' case); see Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, 173, n.17.

³¹ For this reason Procopius also sometimes uses speeches to emasculate Belisarius, by making his speeches completely ineffectual. For instance, at I.18.17–26 Belisarius is unable to convince the Roman troops to stop fighting the fleeing Persians. The Romans are beaten when the Persians turn and fight them.

Justinian's representative.³² If the general is ineffectual and emasculated, what of his leader? An ineffectual general suggests an incompetent emperor.

So, as in the *Persian Wars*, Procopius uses *tyche* in the *Vandal Wars* to undercut Justinian's propaganda by suggesting that the divine historical agent is working against the Romans rather than for them. But Procopius is not content to counter Justinian's propaganda in this way alone. In *Novel* 78 Justinian claimed to be liberating Africa and the West from the oppression of Arian occupiers

καὶ γὰρ δὴ ταύτης ἔνεκα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἐπὶ Λιβύης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑσπέρας
τηλικούτους ἡράμεθα πολέμους ὑπὲρ τε τῆς ὀρθῆς πρὸς θεὸν δόξης ὑπὲρ τε
τῆς τῶν ὑπηκόων ἐλευθερίας

For indeed, because of this desire we undertook such great wars in Libya and
in the West, for the sake of right belief in God and for the sake of the
freedom of our subjects. (Nov. 78.4.1)

Thus the Vandal war is portrayed as liberation of the oppressed and a holy war against the Arian heretics.³³ He does not make a secret of the fact that the war involved the enslavement of the Vandals.³⁴ In fact, in *Novel* 8 this is spun as a great achievement

...βανδύλους καταδουλωσάντων καὶ πολλά γε ἔτι καὶ μείζονα τούτων
ἐλπίζόντων παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ λαβεῖν τε καὶ πρᾶξαι...

...having enslaved the Vandals and hoping, by God, to undertake and achieve
many still greater things... (Nov. 8.10.2)

Procopius, however, does not see this enslavement as a great achievement. His focus is on the horrible effects of the oppression of the so-called oppressors, the Vandals, rather than the liberation of African Romans. He uses the divine agent *tyche* to paint a pitiful picture of the Vandal ruler Gelimer. *Tyche* is made to act as a counterbalance to Justinian's claims that the war was about liberation and that enslavement of the Vandals was a good thing.

...κακοπάθειαν τὴν ἐν Παπούα ὑποστάντα, καὶ νῦν ἐν αἰχμαλώτων λόγῳ
ἤκοντα, πάντων τε ταύτη τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ φλαύρων ἐν πείρᾳ
γεγονότα, ἄλλου οὐδενὸς ἄξια τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἢ γέλωτος πολλοῦ οἶεσθαι
εἶναι.

[Gelimer], having undergone suffering on Papua, and now having come in
the manner of prisoners of war, and having had the experience of all the
things [that come] from *tyche*, good and bad, thought that human affairs were
worthy of nothing other than much laughter. (IV.7.15)

³² Procopius, *Aed.* I.10.12–16, esp. 16; see also Corippus I.272–293, and Cameron's commentary on this passage: F.C. Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris, libri IV*, ed. & trans. A. Cameron (London 1976), 140–142. Justinian was also very keen to take credit for Belisarius' victories and to portray himself as the victorious emperor: see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge 1986), 67–68.

³³ See Maas, "Roman Questions, Byzantine Answers", 7.

³⁴ Cameron emphasizes that "Byzantine conquest meant the often harsh imposition of military rule from Constantinople": see Cameron, "Gelimer's Laughter: The Case of Byzantine Africa", in F.M. Clover & R.S. Humphreys (eds), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (Madison 1989), 173.

In this (and other) passages, Procopius is very sympathetic towards Gelimer's plight and the effects that *tyche* has had on him. So, although the divine agent is supposedly working for the Romans in their campaign of freedom for the African Romans in much of the *Vandal Wars*, Procopius' sympathetic treatment of Gelimer creates a picture of the Roman invasion as one of enslavement and oppression rather than liberation.

This story about Gelimer also draws attention to the wider issue of freedom in the empire. Procopius has Pharas (an Erulian in the Roman army) tell Gelimer that if he submits he will have the same status as Belisarius. They will be fellow-slaves:

πάντως δέ σοι καὶ τὸ ξυνδούλῳ Βελισσαρίῳ εἶναι ὑπερβολὴ τις ὕβρεως φαίνεται.

But at all events it seems to you an excess of insult to be even a fellow-slave with Belisarius. (IV.6.21)

Belisarius has as little freedom as a captured barbarian. Procopius is keen to point out that Justinian's claim that he brings freedom for the African Romans is a joke, since even his best general is no better than a slave.³⁵

Gothic Wars

It is most notably in the *Gothic Wars* that Procopius has the divine agent, *tyche*, deliberately acting against Roman interests. At VI.8.1, *tyche* stirs up trouble for the Romans

τῆς δὲ τύχης ὁ φθόνος ᾧδαιεν ἤδη ἐπὶ Ῥωμαίους, ἐπεὶ τὰ πράγματα εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς σφίσιν ἐπίπροσθεν προϊόντα ἑώρα, κακῶ τε κεραυνῶναι τινὶ ταῦτα ἐθέλουσα, ἔριν ἐξ οὐδεμιᾶς αἰτίας λόγου ἀξίας ἐπενόει Βελισσαρίῳ τε καὶ Κωνσταντίνῳ.

But the jealousy of *tyche* was already swelling against the Romans, since she saw their affairs advancing well and happily before them, and wishing to mingle these things with some evil, she contrived a quarrel, for no cause worthy of reason, between Belisarius and Constantinus.

This clearly counters Justinian's propaganda that a divine being is acting on behalf of the Romans. Likewise, in Book VII, the divine agent works against the Romans just as they seem likely to defeat the Goths and march victorious into Rome

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἦν ταῦτα βουλομένη τῇ τύχῃ, τῶν τινος φθονερῶν δαιμόνων μηχανὴ γέγονεν, ἥ τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα ἔφειρε τρόπῳ τοιᾷδε.

But since these things were not according to the wish of *tyche*, the working of some one among envious *daimones* happened, which destroyed the affairs of the Romans in this way. (VII.19.22)

³⁵ Charles Pazdernik, "Procopius and Thucydides on the Labors of War: Belisarius and Brasidas in the Field", *TAPA* 130 (2000), 157, points out that status-distinctions are fairly tenuous, since Justinian refers to both Romans and conquered barbarians as 'subjects'. Here Procopius stands in the tradition of Latin historiography following Tacitus, which emphasizes the servility that is a consequence of being dependent on an emperor.

These two passages above are clear examples of the divine being acting against the Romans and so are not difficult to interpret as counteractions against Justinian's propaganda. Procopius counters Justinian's propaganda by suggesting that the divine historical agent is not working for the Romans.³⁶

Book VIII

Kaldellis suggests that Procopius uses *tyche* in Book VIII to counter Justinian's propaganda.³⁷ He argues that Procopius uses *tyche* to suggest that a capricious pagan deity is causing events instead of the Christian God.³⁸ But, as we have seen above, the way *tyche* acts is not inconsistent with sixth-century views about the Christian God. Thus Procopius' criticism, although hidden, is more damning to Justinian than Kaldellis suggests.

Although the way in which Kaldellis suggests Procopius counters the propaganda is flawed, his general suggestion is certainly correct. At VIII.23.7, Justinian and *tyche* are directly opposed

ταύτην Ἰωάννης ἀναλεξάμενος τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, καίπερ αὐτῷ πρὸς βασιλέως ἀπορρηθὲν, αὐτοκέλευστος ἐτόλμα ἰέναι, τῶν οἱ πρὸς αὐτοκράτορος ἐπηγγελμένων προὔργιαίτεραν τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης στενοχωρίαν πεποιημένος.

When John had read this letter, even though it had been forbidden him by the Emperor, he dared to go of his own account, deeming the difficulty from *tyche* of more consequence than the things proclaimed by the Emperor.
(VIII.23.7)

Rather than the divine historical agent working for Justinian against his enemies, in this passage Justinian is directly opposed to *tyche* and John is forced to make a choice between the two. Furthermore, Procopius indicates that John was right to go against Justinian and follow divine will. The Romans defeat the Goths decisively and weaken their power (VIII.23.31–42).

Throughout the *Wars*, then, Procopius uses *tyche* as a divine agent in ways that subtly undermine imperial propaganda. Unlike the *Secret History*, in which Procopius openly criticized the Emperor, the *Wars* was a public document and thus criticism was necessarily more veiled. We have established that Procopius can use *tyche* to refer to a divine agent who is compatible with contemporary understandings of how the Christian God acts in history. But this God is not acting as Justinian proclaimed He was in official edicts like those preserved in the Justinianic Code. This God acts against Roman interests by causing defeat in battle, disrupting the plans of the Emperor, and drawing attention to fundamental inconsistencies in imperial policy in relation to freedom. By using *tyche* – which has a

³⁶ The relationship between *tyche* and the *daimones* is not clear. It appears that they are some sort of angelic beings whose wills are subjugated to the will of *tyche*. Further work on this question is necessary before more definite conclusions should be drawn. Warren Treadgold appears to be wrong in identifying *tyche* with the Devil at this point: W.T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (New York 2007), 223. Such an interpretation misses Procopius' political comment on the Gothic wars.

³⁷ Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea*, 213–216.

³⁸ Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea*, chapter 5 *passim*.

range of non-politically charged meanings – to refer to the Christian God, Procopius veils his political criticism in the cloud of classicizing style.

Ross Burns

Justinian's Fortifications East of Antioch

Almost fifty years ago, Dillemann put the issues starkly – fortifications were a useless distraction:

The *Notitia Dignatatum*, at the beginning of the 5th Century, only speaks of units, generally cavalry, with their bases. In [Procopius'] *Buildings*, the only issues are fortified positions with no mention of units. Defence policy has reached sclerosis. Previously, positions were surrounded by walls of light construction, like enclosures, which attracted Procopius' disapproval. For good reasons Justinian's predecessors judged it useless to raise solid ramparts; it was a nonsense to condemn cavalry to defend them. The latter only had to be given shelter from the blows of marauders and pillagers; they did not imagine they had to withstand a siege.¹

Is it true, as Dillemann has argued, that Justinian put too much faith in fortresses and not enough in manpower and élan? As a corrective, we have Liebeschuetz's observation that while fortresses did not in themselves amount to an impermeable physical barrier, they prevented permanent occupation of territory by an enemy.

In the sixth century there was no way in which the Persians could be prevented from penetrating into the Empire. The only way to check an invasion was by means of a field army strong enough to defeat or at least to threaten the invading force. Fortified cities provided no kind of barrier and most of them could be captured easily. Nevertheless, they too had an important function. They provided shelter for the inhabitants, their corn and their animals. They also provided bases for Roman armies operating in the neighbourhood...[The Persians] could not remain in permanent occupation while the cities were not in their hands.²

It is well recognised that no line of fortresses can operate as an effective line of defence in its own right.³ Nevertheless, the distribution of forts could mark out the extent of territory a state sought to control for most purposes. There would be times when that line could not possibly be maintained – some penetration would be tolerated in order to lure an enemy onto territory more favourable to a defending force. Moreover, by modern standards some functions (such as control of population movement; taxation of goods) were imperfectly exercised on the fringes of a state's territory. With these limitations in mind, this paper begins by looking at how the frontier defences were deployed in the Roman imperial period under Diocletian and then examines the changes, in doctrine as well as in practice, some 200 years later.

¹ L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale and pays adjacents* (Paris 1962), 224.

² J.H.G.W. Liebeschuetz (ed), "The Defences of Syria in the Sixth Century", in *From Diocletian to the Arab Conquest: Change in the Late Roman Empire* (Ashgate 1977), 487–499.

³ The arguments were most forcefully advanced in B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire – The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford 1990). For a more recent study, see note 5 below.

Taking the line of forts now reasonably assumed to have been built or improved under Diocletian in the provinces of Arabia and Syria, gives the pattern outlined in Fig. 1.

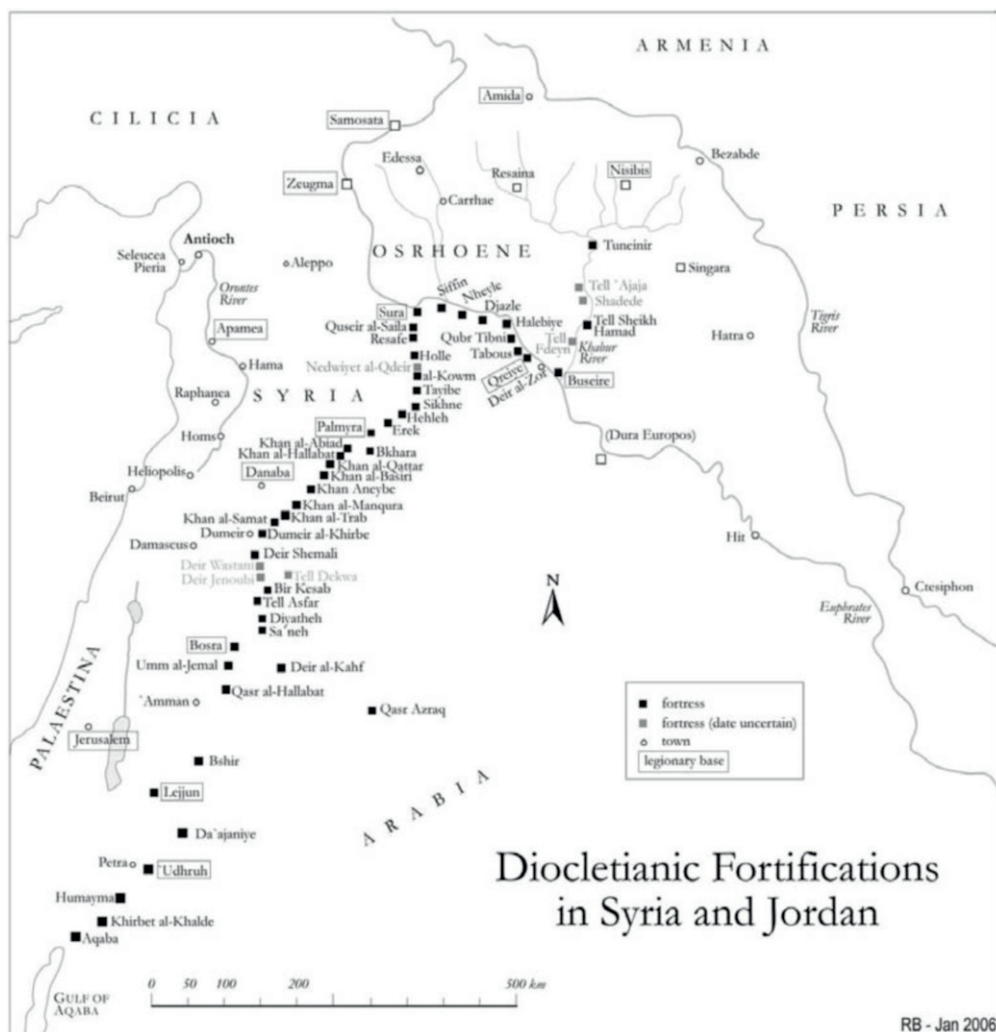


Figure 2: Diocletian's Fortifications in the East

This map includes only the eastern-most fortifications along the line, and only legionary bases, not other fortified points, to the west. It is interesting that many of the 'Diocletianic' dates blithely attached to the fortifications by Père Poidebard's aerial researches in the 1920s and 1930s,⁴ regarded with some scepticism in later decades, are now in some cases confirmed by new surveys and a limited range of excavations.⁵

⁴ A. Poidebard, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie – le limes de Trajan à la conquête arabe – recherches ariennes (1925–1932) - tome 1* (Paris 1934); R. Mouterde & A. Poidebard, *Le limes de Chalcis – organisation de la steppe en Haute Syrie romaine – tome 2 – Atlas* (Paris 1945).

⁵ For the most thorough and recent exploration of the issues in the context of southern Jordan, S.T. Parker & J.W. Betlyon, *The Roman Frontier in Central Jordan: Final Report on the Limes Arabicus*

Looking more closely at the area of northern Syria and southeastern Turkey which was to become the preoccupation of the Byzantines under Justinian and which is the main area of concentration of this paper, the second map (Fig. 2) shows Diocletian's deployments in the sector.

The third map (Fig. 3) shows that two centuries or more later, Justinian's priorities were markedly different. Little of the Diocletianic line has been retained by Justinian's reign, but what survived has been supplemented by new fortifications, which show a much denser concentration in the zone east of Antioch. This new pattern can be accounted for in two ways.

First, the southern frontier (not covered in this paper) was now largely given over to local militia (*limitanei*) and Arab federated forces to maintain. This policy was not without its problems and broke down almost completely after Justinian. It placed much less reliance on fortifications though it required some imperial units, specifically those under the control of the *dux* of Phoenice Libanensis, to be ready to back the *limitanei*.⁶

In Fig. 3, the broken line represents the approximate limit of political control between the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires. There are two points to note: the line of political control is not matched by the deployment of fortifications; but the deployment of forts does follow another logic. They are spread around the likely avenues of approach of any invading force from the east, making little attempt to block intruders near the frontiers.

Broadly, those lines of approach are via the lower slopes of the eastern Anatolian highlands along the axis that had been followed historically by most east-west traffic. This had the advantage of well-watered country with plentiful food resources, hence the thickest concentration of fortifications. The second route up the Euphrates Valley offered the Sasanians fewer fixed defences to overcome and some element of surprise. Note that it does not seem that the third possibility, the route through the middle, crossing the mid-Khabur and the steppe area of Osrhoene, was part of the planning. The Khabur Valley, possessing only a poor stream that still supports a relatively low level of population, was not deemed to require a fixed line of defences even in Diocletian's day. West of the Khabur, the path towards the environs of Beroea (Aleppo) was virtually barren with little water. In Procopius, the only threat ever identified in this area were the "Saracens", not the Persian armies. There is little evidence on the ground today of any formidable Justinianic barrier though some of Procopius' sites cannot be identified. The only sites along the Khabur that can be reasonably attributed to Justinian are Theodosiopolis (Ras al-'Ain),⁷ Thannuris (Tunaneir)⁸ and Circesium (modern Buseire).⁹ Thebetha (Tell Brak) does have a Byzantine

Project, 1980–1989, vols 1 & 2 (New Haven 2006). Their survey lays to rest Isaac's view that the concept of *limes* was not primarily related to the task of protection against an external foe and confirms that this southern sector was indeed part of Diocletian's *limes* arrangements. Interesting results are also emerging from German researches on the frontier south of the mid-Euphrates, discussed below. On the concept of 'frontier', G. Greatrex, "Roman Frontiers and Foreign Policy in the East", in R. Alston and S. Lieu (eds), *Aspects of the Roman East: Papers in Honour of Professor Fergus Millar FBA* (Turnhout 2007), 103–173.

⁶ Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War 502–532* (Leeds 1997), 151 notes Justinian's efforts in 527 to upgrade the defences of Palmyra and the forward deployment of the Emesa *dux* to Palmyra).

⁷ C.W.B. McEwan, S. Kinda, H. Frankfort et al., *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah* (Chicago 1958).

⁸ Still unpublished, but see D. Kennedy & D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air* (London 1990), 118–121. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 150 notes that an early attempt at this time to rebuild a fort at Thannuris was thwarted by 'Arab raids'. On Justinian's program, see Procop. *Aed.* 2.6.13–16 (Loeb edition, trans Dewing, Cambridge (Mass), 1941).

⁹ B. Geyer & J-Y. Monchambert, *La basse vallée de l'Euphrate syrien du néolithique à l'avènement de l'Islam* (Beirut 2003), 93, 130. Little of the Byzantine fortress remains but an account of the more

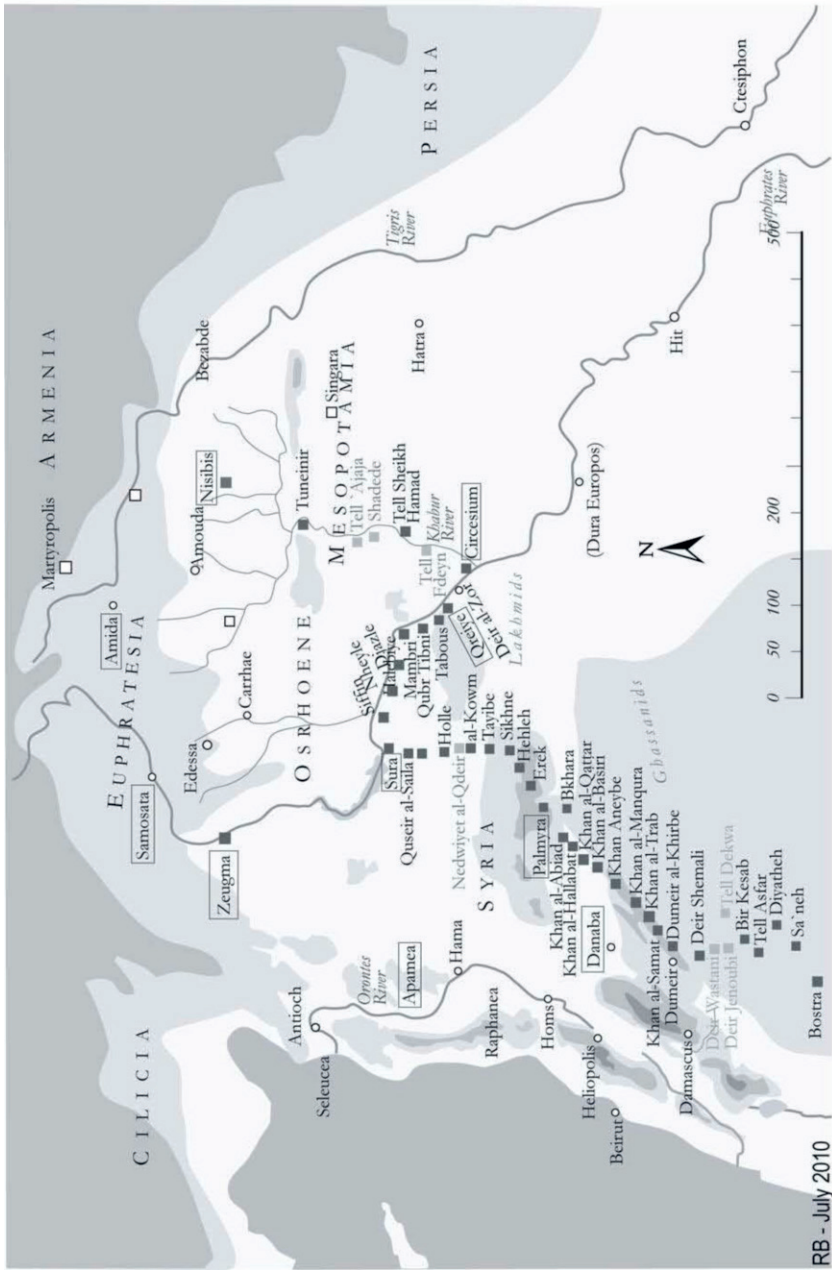


Figure 3: Diocletian's Fortifications East of Antioch

impressive fortifications a century ago can be found in F. Sarre & Herzfeld, E. *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet* (Berlin 1911 [1, 3], 1920 [2, 4]), 172–174.

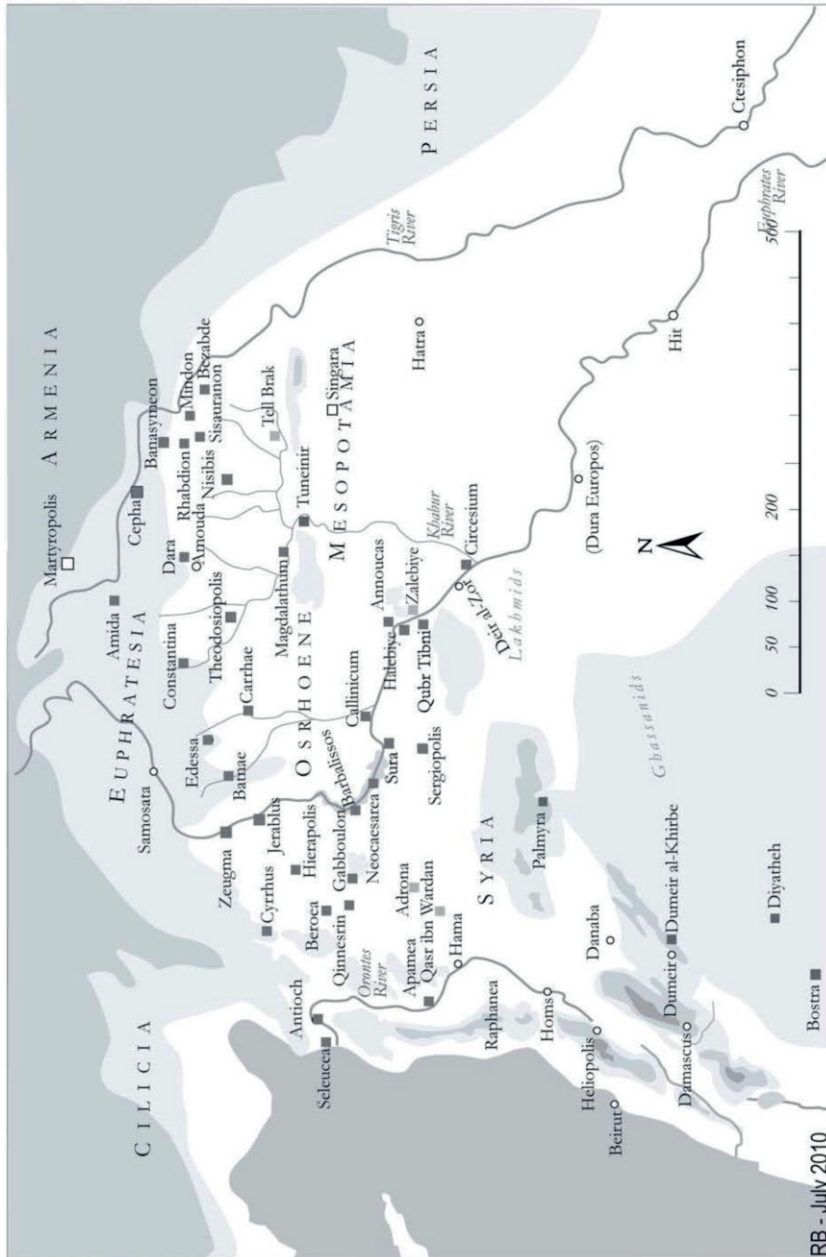


Figure 4: Justinian's Fortifications East of Antioch

phase, but Roman control had been interrupted well before our period. In a recent French survey of the Upper Khabur, Lyonnet reported relatively low levels of occupation in both the Roman-Parthian and Byzantine-Sasanian periods (Nisibis and Resaina excepted). 'The inland territory seems to have been astonishingly empty'.¹⁰

Anastasius' Program, Kavadh's Response

It was the fortification of Dara by Anastasius in 507–508 that had brought renewed imperial sponsorship to the fortification program.¹¹ Dara was clearly seen as the fulcrum of the Byzantine position in Mesopotamia, the strongpoint which sought to balance the loss of Nisibis to the Persians in the 'hundred year truce' of 421. The Persian leader, Kavadh, was furious at this attempt to get around treaty obligations (*Wars* I, ii, 15) but he was distracted by further campaigns in Armenia. When he had time to return to the issue, he let it drop in favour of peace. But it rankled.

Anastasius' program probably did not amount to a total revision of the frontier defences. Whitby argues it was an interrupted achievement and that the emperor dared not risk further salients onto the Persian side of the *limes*.¹² Instead, along with probable rebuilding at Sergiopolis (Resafe) he began the program (later expanded) to put resources into boosting the monasteries as frontline defences – generous donations were made to Mar Gabriel in 512. Resafe was raised to a *metropolis* in 514–518.

Justinian's First Campaigns 527–532

At the start of the first series of Persian campaigns under Justinian, the emperor appointed Belisarius to be Commander at Dara in 527. Greatrex has noted that it is possible that, from the beginning of his sole rule, Justinian fully appreciated the strategic value of Dara and had initiated further efforts to strengthen its walls. It is also noteworthy that Justinian instructed Belisarius (*Wars* I, xiii, 1) to strengthen the salient extending east from Dara by the construction of a new fort at Mindon (Mindouos). The Persians were having none of this attempt to strengthen the Tur Abdin salient and chased off or slaughtered the Byzantine construction team and destroyed the fortifications.

Three years later (530), the Persians attacked in the direction of Dara (still possibly under reconstruction), via Amouda, 30 kms or so to the south.¹³ Belisarius supplemented the fortress' defences with a series of trenches to blunt the enemy attack from the south. The first day of fighting was inconclusive so the Persians moved reinforcements from Nisibis. This was not enough to prevent a major Roman victory on the second day and the Persians were forced to return home defeated. The fortress of Dara played no direct role in the engagements, but clearly provided the Byzantine army with a fortified (if not yet fully secure) base.

The next campaign was undertaken by the Persian commander, Azarethes, who entered Syria with the support of Arab forces under al-Mundhir (Alamoundras) in 531. Perhaps

¹⁰ B. Lyonnet, "Continuity and Change in the Upper Khabur (N. E. Syria), from the Achaemenids to the Abbasid Period", in Bertille (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the Early Islamic Period* (Berliner Beitrage zum Vorderen Orient 17: Berlin 1996), 349–362.

¹¹ B. Croke & J. Crow, "Procopius and Dara", *JRS* 73 (1983), 143–159. See also F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I. Politics and Empire in the Later Roman World* (ARCA 46: Cambridge 2006), 65–72.

¹² M. Whitby, "Procopius and the Development of Roman Defences in Upper Mesopotamia", *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East* (BAR International Series 297 i: 1986), 717–736.

¹³ Work on Dara may have been incomplete at this point, thus attracting Persian interest in taking the city before its circuit walls were rebuilt: Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 170.

because of the importance of Arab support, Azarethas chose the Euphrates route and headed for Antioch.¹⁴ The Persians got as far as Gabboulon (Jabul 34 kms southeast of Aleppo) when they learned that Byzantine forces under Belisarius were drawn up at nearby Chalcis (modern Qinnisrin / al-'Iss). After laying siege to the fortress at Gabboulon, thus exposing their forces to Roman harassment, the Persians judged that the army of Belisarius was closing in on them. They abandoned Gabboulon and retreated via the right bank of the Euphrates.

Belisarius tracked their withdrawal, reluctant to seek a pitched battle when the enemy was already in retreat, but was finally persuaded by his commanders to confront the Persians on the southern bank opposite the fort at Callinicum (modern Raqqa). The Persians fought doggedly and those Roman forces that had not fled were reduced to a small contingent holding out on the river bank. The Persians, however, resumed their retreat. When he returned to Persia, Azarethes found Kavadh ungrateful. The abandonment of Gabboulon was hardly an impressive score:

Now when Azarethes came into the presence of the king, Kavadh enquired of him whether he came back with any Roman fortress won over to their side, ...And Azarethes said that he had captured no fortress, but that he had conquered the Romans and Belisarius in battle (Procopius *Wars* 1, xviii, 54–56, Loeb edition, Dewing trans, Cambridge (Mass) 1914).

There are two interesting conclusions from Procopius' account of 530–531 which bear out Liebeschuetz's thesis:

1. The Persian king expected real results on the ground, not just booty and a whiff of victory.
2. Fortresses, therefore, did matter. Though it was rarely important to waste much time on reducing isolated fortifications, they provided a defending force with refuge, and a depot for supplies if not a fixed line of defence. A thick clustering of enemy fixed positions made it difficult to retain momentum deep inside hostile territory. (Clearly, for example, the Persians saw Mindouos as a distinct hindrance to their attempts to reach Dara and worth a battle in itself.)

Khusro's Campaigns 540–544

We turn now to the four campaigns by Kavadh's successor, Khusro, described in some detail in Procopius' *Wars*, to see what further role the fortifications played in fending off the next Persian leader's invasion plans and in determining the nature of the Byzantine response. The 'eternal peace' (532–540) may have brought a level of complacency and neglect of further work on the fortification that encouraged Khusro to feel he would have a free hand.¹⁵ Certainly, Khusro's first campaign was the most extensive in terms of territory covered. During the one campaigning season of 540, Khusro wandered seemingly at will over much of Byzantine Syria (Fig. 5). The Persian army's route is marked on Fig. 5.¹⁶

¹⁴ Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 196 notes that the Euphrates forts at Circesium and Halebiye were probably in a poor state at the beginning of Justinian's reign and so could easily be by-passed.

¹⁵ Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 220.

¹⁶ G. Downey, "The Persian Campaign in Syria in A. D. 540", *Speculum* 28 (1953), 340–348.

The first point to note is that it was not until the Persians reached Sura on the mid Euphrates that they met any opposition, having decided that the great fortifications at Circesium and (after a desultory siege) Halebiye were not worth worrying about. Sura was besieged not necessarily because its fortifications offered any threat but because the '*horse on which Chosroes was riding neighed and stamped the ground with his foot*' [*Wars* II, v, 8], interpreted by Khusro as an omen. The assault was at first held at bay by the Byzantine army operating from the walls but, when their commander was killed, the city resorted to negotiations. The Persians took advantage of the negotiations to take the city by subterfuge.

The main Roman force under Bouzes was waiting at Hierapolis (modern Membij in northern Syria), with half the forces deployed outside the town to prevent their becoming trapped by a Persian siege. Khusro, however, had no intention of encountering the main Roman force for the moment and headed for the more populated areas east of Antioch and south of Aleppo (Beroea). Bouzes and his field army absented themselves from any efforts to track the Persian forces or even to defend Antioch and did not reappear until near the end of the campaign, at Edessa. Khusro had the field to himself. It was now simply a matter of deciding which towns might offer the most attractive ransom possibilities. Usually a siege, if laid at all, was only pressed to the point where the citizens or their leaders handed over a sizeable ransom though in some cases the weak state of the defences (Hierapolis, Apamea, Chalcis, Constantina) would be the major factor in a town's acceptance of surrender on terms. There appears to have been no thought on the Persian forces' part of systematically seizing and holding forts or territory as Kavadh had apparently envisaged.

There were, however, three further siege operations – at Beroea, Antioch and, during the final stage of the campaign, at Dara. In two cases, Beroea and Antioch itself, the citizens decided that the price they had to pay for their security was too high and sought to resist the Persian assault. In both cases, the cities' fortifications played an important role in their efforts to hold out. As Aleppo's outer town walls were said to be weak, the citizens, after paying half the ransom agreed, decided to put up a struggle from within the citadel. Khusro found the defenders ill prepared. They had brought their animals and horses into the citadel which enjoyed only one water source, thus weakening their capacity to hold out. Note that it was the townspeople not the soldiers who resisted. According to Procopius, 'the majority [of the soldiers] came as willing deserters to Khusro, putting forth as their grievance that the government owed them their pay for a long time; and with him they later went into the land of Persia' (*Wars* II, vii, 37).

Inevitably, the fall of Antioch was the real wake-up call to the Byzantines. The Emperor's relative, Germanus, had been sent with a small force to defend the capital of the eastern provinces. Procopius' account of the taking of Antioch contains much acerbic detail, particularly snide remarks about the less-than-serious nature of its inhabitants, though (as Averil Cameron points out)¹⁷ it was again the civilians rather than the Byzantine army that delayed the Persian taking of the town. The fact that Germanus followed Bouzes' example in absenting himself from the fighting also underlines that the conventional forces saw little point in trusting fortifications to sustain their stand. Khusro was stung by the Antiochenes' taunts into a simultaneous attack on both the walls along the Orontes River and the fortifications on the heights of Mt Silpius. After a general panic set in with the Persians' successful storming of the upper citadel, most of the population and the military fled to Daphne, though the last-minute resistance of the youths of the city enraged Khusro and fired his urge to destroy the city's facilities, sparing only 'a sanctuary which they call a church' (*Wars*, II, ix, 15). Khusro apparently made his intentions plain – a yearly Byzantine

¹⁷ A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley 1985), 164.

tribute would avoid the need for annual campaigns. According to Procopius, *Wars* II, x, 19–21:

Khusro made the demand that the Romans give him a large sum of money, but he warned them not to hope to establish peace for all time by giving money at that moment only. For friendship, he said, which is made by men on terms of money is generally spent as fast as the money is used up. It was necessary, therefore, that the Romans should pay some definite annual sum to the Persians.

The taking of Seleucia, Antioch's port, appears to have been unopposed – 'there he neither met nor harmed a single Roman and he bathed himself alone in the sea' (*Wars* II, xi, 1). Khusro then turned south to Apamea. This time the citizens (there is no mention of the army) made no effort to man the substantial walls (originating from the Greek period) and, trusting in the protection of the Holy Cross, admitted the Persian forces (*Wars* II, xi, 21–22). Through what today would be called standover tactics, the Persians then simply seized all the considerable treasure of the city's churches, sparing the Cross.

The rest of Khusro's 540 itinerary was an even more blatant search for plunder, rampaging across the Euphrates (via Chalcis, where the citizens hid the soldiers and paid ransom to ensure the city was spared) to its north bank and on into the foothills of the Anatolian plateau. Even such apparently well-fortified towns as Edessa and Constantina paid up.

The Persians' old bugbear, Dara, was the last objective. A concerted attempt was made to take Dara.



Figure 6: Northern Walls of Dara

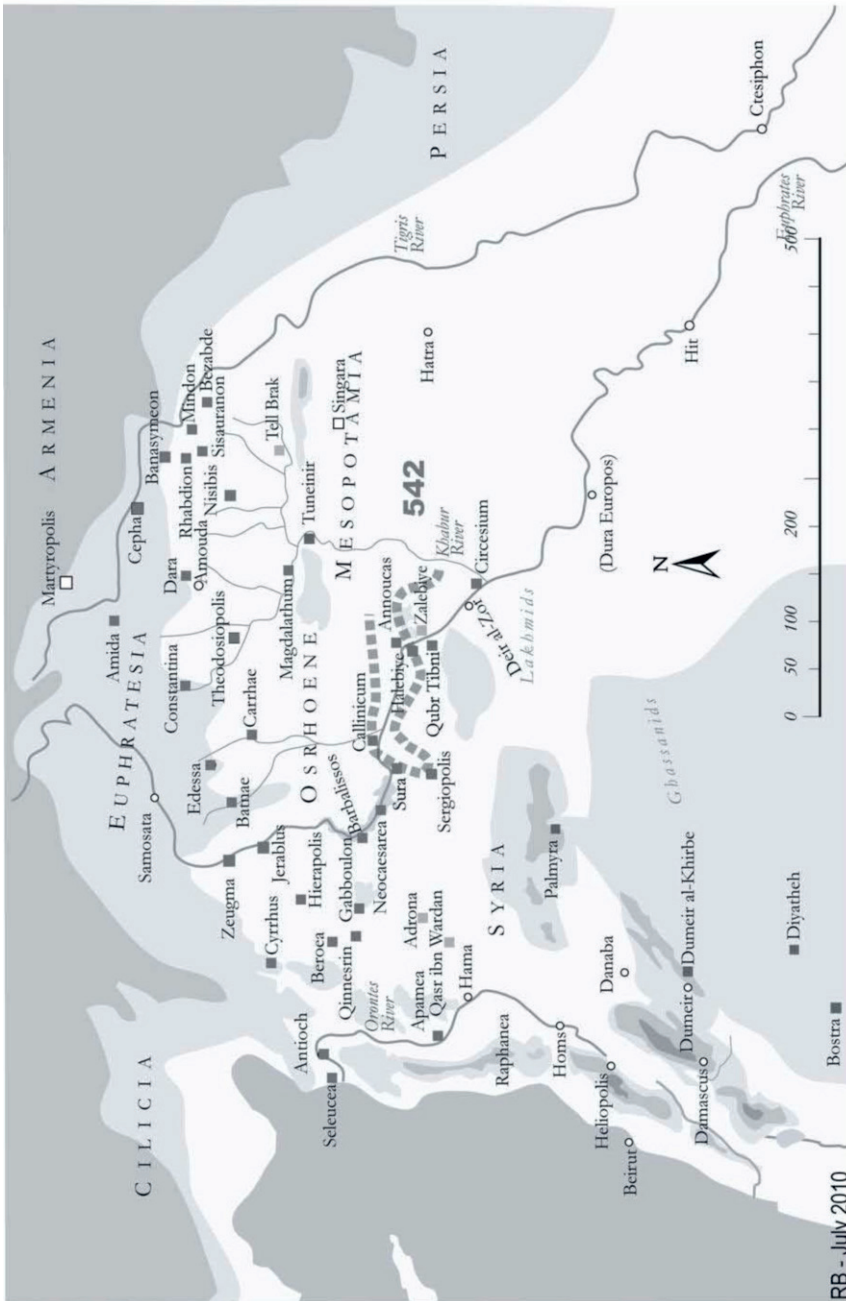


Figure 7: 542 Campaign

There is no mention in Procopius of any discussion over ransom and Khusro was forced to switch from his initial objective of taking the outer walls from the west. He sought better ground on the east through which a tunnel might be dug. However, the Persian tunnel was exposed by a Roman counter-mine and after that reverse, Khusro gave up the attempt and returned home.

Khusro returned to the challenge of Dara the following year, 541. Belisarius had chosen Dara as the assembly point for the army he had been instructed by Justinian to raise in order to block any further invasion moves by Khusro. While Belisarius preferred a defensive posture, his commanders persuaded him to seek a 'preventative' conflict and he advanced tentatively in the direction of the first major Persian stronghold, the former Roman centre at Nisibis.

South of Dara, Belisarius was in Persian territory. At this point, the Persians were particularly keen to ensure the safety of their foothold in Nisibis which had passed to them under Jovian in 363. We have no idea today as to what defences were provided at Nisibis. Whatever might remain probably lies in the no-man's land on the frontier between Syria and Turkey where the columns of a Roman temple have intrigued travellers for centuries.¹⁸

Whatever the state of Nisibis' defences, Belisarius did not rise to the bait and assault the city with his fresh army. He decided instead to seek a policy of dividing his forces and denying the enemy any advantage from being able to seek refuge behind Nisibis' walls. 'We shall anticipate them and compel them to turn and escape to some other place, and thus render Nisibis without its defenders easy of capture for us' (*Wars* II, xviii, 15). Belisarius thus moved further east to besiege Sisauranon, again resisting calls from his forces to advance further into Persian territory by arguing that 'discreet hesitation is well adapted always to save those who adopt such a course' (*Wars* II, xix, 11). In fact, Belisarius found through espionage that the inhabitants of Sisauranon were low on provisions and he was able to arrange surrender on mild terms. Sisauranon was razed and appears to have played no further role in the Byzantine-Persian confrontation in the area.¹⁹ Thus the second conflict under Khusro fizzled out (nothing more is heard of taking Nisibis) with neither side too keen to put their defences to the test.

Khusro's third campaign (542) is an even more curious affair. According to Procopius' *Wars*, he headed straight for Sergiopolis, today's Resafe in the north Syrian desert, less than 30 kms south of the Euphrates. He 'kept the river on his right' but there is no mention of any resistance or impediment from the Roman forts along the Euphrates from Circesium to Sura.²⁰ In a revealing passage in *Wars* (II, xx, 19), Procopius argues that this time Khusro's purpose was not to plunder Euphratesia:

¹⁸ The only study of Nusaybin, J.-M. Fiey, *Nisibe: métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours* (CCO 388; Subsidia; tomus 54: Louvain 1977), examines the city's ecclesiastical history and not its few surviving monuments. However, the baptistery of the former basilica is being excavated by the Turkish authorities and should produce extremely interesting results.

¹⁹ On the location of Sisauranon, T.A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey – volume III (The Upper and Lower Euphrates; Tigris)* (London 1989), 351.

²⁰ Little attention has been paid to the remains of the Roman-Byzantine fortifications along the mid-Euphrates including Siffin, Djazla, Nheyle, Tibni (Mambri), Tabous until the recent survey by J. Napoli, "Les remparts de la forteresse de Djazla sur le Moyen-Euphrate", *Syria* 77 (2000), 117–136. On Tabous, see M. Lonnqvist, "Documenting, Identifying and Protecting a Late Roman-Byzantine Fort at Tabus on the Euphrates" (CIPA 2005 XX International Symposium, 26 September – 01 October, 2005 Torino, Italy). Raqqa, Resafe, Sura and Halebiye/Zalebiye have been more thoroughly researched. On Raqqa: V. Daiber & Becker, A. e. *Raqqa III – Baudenkmäler und Paläste I* (Mainz 2004); S. Heidemann & Becker, A. e. *Raqqa II – Die islamische Stadt* (Mainz am Rhein 2003). On Sura and Resafe: M. Konrad, *Resafa V – Der spätromische Limes in Nordsyrien* (Mainz am Rhein

...his purpose was to lead the army straight for Palestine, in order that he might plunder all their treasures and especially those in Jerusalem. For he had it from hearsay that this was an especially goodly land and peopled by wealthy inhabitants. And all the Romans, both officers and soldiers, were far from entertaining any thought of confronting the enemy or of standing in the way of their passage, but manning their strongholds as each one could, they thought it sufficient to preserve them and save themselves.

When Khusro learnt that Belisarius had been sent against him, he revised his plans (there is no mention again of Jerusalem) and contemplated crossing to the north bank of the river. (Belisarius was encamped at Europus-Jerablus on the current border between Turkey and Syria). A Byzantine envoy gave him a warning on the risk of proceeding deep into Roman-protected territory: '...the Romans, if conquered, could easily save themselves in strongholds and in their own land, while if the Persians should meet with any reverse, not even a messenger would escape to the land of the Persians' (*Wars* II, xxi, 14–15).

As his supplies were not sufficient to return by the southern course he had initially taken, Khusro ignored that part of Belisarius' warning and returned home via the north bank, taking and plundering Callinicum (today Raqqa) on the way. He found the town too tempting a prize as the city's walls had been torn down preparatory to reconstruction and the garrison had withdrawn.

The preoccupation of the fourth campaign (two years later, 544 – Fig. 8) was not Dara, but Edessa. Moreover, the motivation was ostensibly religious.

Now this invasion was made by this Khusro not against Justinian, the Emperor of the Romans, nor indeed against any other man, but only against the God whom the Christians reverence. For when in the first invasion he retired, after failing to capture Edessa, both he and the Magi, since they had been worsted by the God of the Christians, fell into a great dejection. Wherefore Khusro, seeking to allay it, uttered a threat in the palace that he would make slaves of all the inhabitants of Edessa and bring them to the land of Persia, and would turn the city into a pasture for sheep. (*Wars* II, xxvi, 4)

Edessa was the only objective of the 544 campaign and it was pursued with a sustained vigour largely lacking in the previous siege operations. There is no evidence that the modern citadel walls (Fig. 9) included Byzantine remains (though the steep terrain dictates that the Abbasid-period masonry must follow the line of the Roman and Byzantine predecessors), but the two columns on top of the citadel are certainly from the palace of the previous Arab client rulers of Edessa, the Abgars. To gain entry to the city's outer walls,²¹ the Persians had to employ siege measures on an unprecedented scale including the building of an artificial hill, probably a timber structure which could be pushed up against

2001). Halebiye and Zalebiye have been surveyed in by J. Lauffray. *Halabiyya-Zenobia – Place forte du limes oriental et la Haute-Mesopotamie au VI^e siècle – Tome I: les duchés frontaliers de Mesopotamie et les fortifications de Zenobia*, BAH 119 (Paris 1983); J. Lauffray. *Halabiyya-Zenobia – Place forte du limes oriental et la Haute-Mesopotamie au VI^e siècle – Tome II: l'architecture publique, religieuse, Privée et funéraire* (Paris 1991).

²¹ Surviving in a rebuilt version in part, for example, at the Bey Capisi.

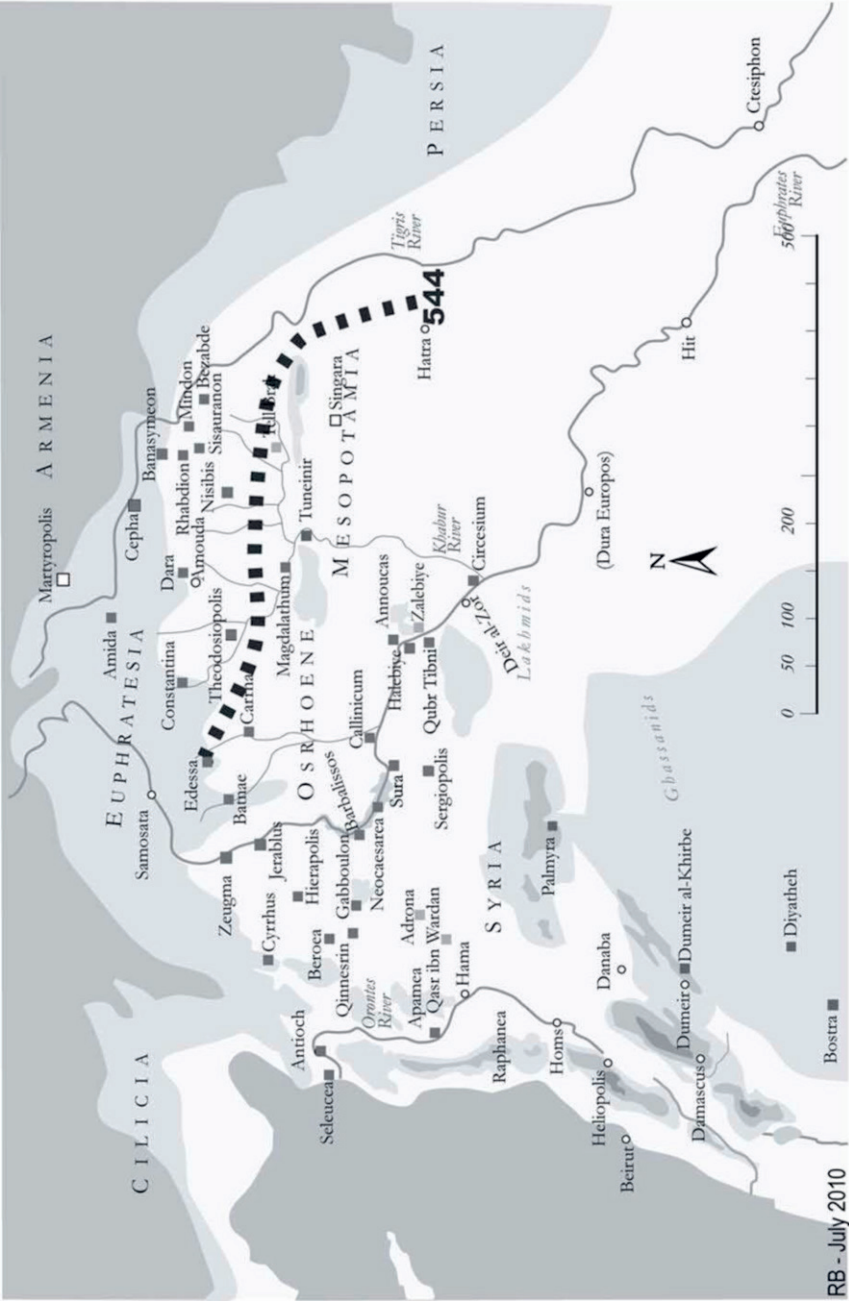


Figure 8: 544 Campaign



Figure 9: Walls of Edessa's Citadel

the fortifications. In the end, the campaign was settled by a truce after two weeks or so of siege. Khusro settled for five centenaria of gold and destroyed the city walls before he left.

Lessons

So what do we learn about the role envisaged for Justinian's fortifications from the narrative in *Wars*? As we have much less archaeological information about Justinian's defensive posts than we do now, for example, on Diocletian's fortifications in Syria and Arabia, it is impossible to build up a chronological sequence of how Justinian's building program related to the events in *Wars*. The sum total of all the written, archaeological and epigraphic dating evidence amounts to:

- Mindon – built and dismantled in 527²²
- Dara – built under Anastasius and under reconstruction during the Persian incursion in 530²³
- Raqqa/Callinicum – Procopius describes as under reconstruction during Kavadh's retreat along the Euphrates in 542
- Cyrrhus – inscription 547/8 (probably citadel hill only)²⁴
- Chalcis – inscription 550²⁵

²² L. Dillemann. *Haute Mésopotamie orientale and pays adjacents* (Paris 1962), 316–318.

²³ Croke & Crow, "Procopius and Dara", 143–159.

²⁴ *IGLS* I, no. 145.

²⁵ G. Bowersock, "Chalcis ad Belum and Anasartha in Byzantine Syria", in *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron, TM 14* (Paris 2002), 47–55.

If *Buildings* was written between 554 to 560, that would seem to indicate that all the rest of the projects were completed by then.²⁶ Reliance solely on the evidence of Procopius however becomes a circular argument.

Based on the physical and written evidence we have, though, the first (and by now somewhat obvious) conclusion is that Justinian was in no way tied to the old concept under Diocletian of a fixed frontier line of defence. Fortifications, however, could serve to funnel any offensive operation along a path onto which the defending forces could direct their attack. The terrain east of Antioch was intended to be a sort of giant pin-ball game in which the flippers extending out from fixed posts might flick or block intruders and make their progress as difficult as possible. In practice, however, the weak role of the garrisons, the uncertain state of their walls in some cases and the citizens' preference to buy their way out of trouble, meant that their role as fortifications was often not invoked.

The second lesson is that fixed defences provided only limited refuge for urban populations. Walls, if stout and well maintained, made it more difficult, but by no means impossible, for the Persians to conduct a program of extortion at will. Citizens were often left to defend their town and citadel walls without the aid of an imperial force.

Third, the Persian forces (more so under Khusro than under Kavadh) seem to have had little inclination to regard fortified points as strategic prizes, perhaps because they offered a tempting target for any Byzantine counter-siege. The Persians did take and temporarily hold forts for their own sake, but the cost was assessed only in the short term. The option of a siege was usually considered only when the opportunities for booty seemed favourable or where the objective of a campaign had a particular symbolism – Antioch, Edessa and Dara, for instance.

Fourth, complementing the 'flipper' strategy, the Byzantines made selective use of the role of fortifications and fortified zones as 'defensive shields'. This is clear in the singular importance both sides attached to Dara. Its construction immediately became a psychological thorn in the Persians' side, convincing them that the Romans were not serious about peace if they had erected such a major fortification so close to the agreed frontier.

But the issue was wider than the Dara fortress. It is apparent in the Tur Abdin region that there must have been a strategic appraisal of the role of fortifications not only in blocking or harassing invaders, but also in defining and securing territory. From there, forces could underpin the Roman presence in the hills of the Tur Abdin, that refuge where Christian monasticism (both Monophysite and Nestorian) survives even to this day. (Fig. 10 indicates in red Christian villages and monasteries where remains or communities survive.)

The Tur Abdin and Dara were clearly seen as a sort of enormous fixed salient, the lynchpin of any effort to block threats to Roman territories to the west (approach to Antioch) and north (Armenia).²⁷

Fifth, while the emphasis in *Buildings* is naturally on physical barriers – a program that probably continued through most of Justinian's reign – no defence strategy could rely solely on walls. The key was to get a sizeable defensive force into the field as quickly as possible. For that, supplies and men had to be stockpiled in well-protected centres back from the front, such as Amida. Much of the construction effort was directed to that objective.

²⁶ Greatrex, "The Dates of Procopius' Works", *BMGS* 18 (1994), 101–114.

²⁷ The Tur Abdin has been little studied until recently and not at all in relation to its fortifications. For a good account of the Christian presence in the area, see A. Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier: The Early History of Tur 'Abdin*, (Cambridge 1990).

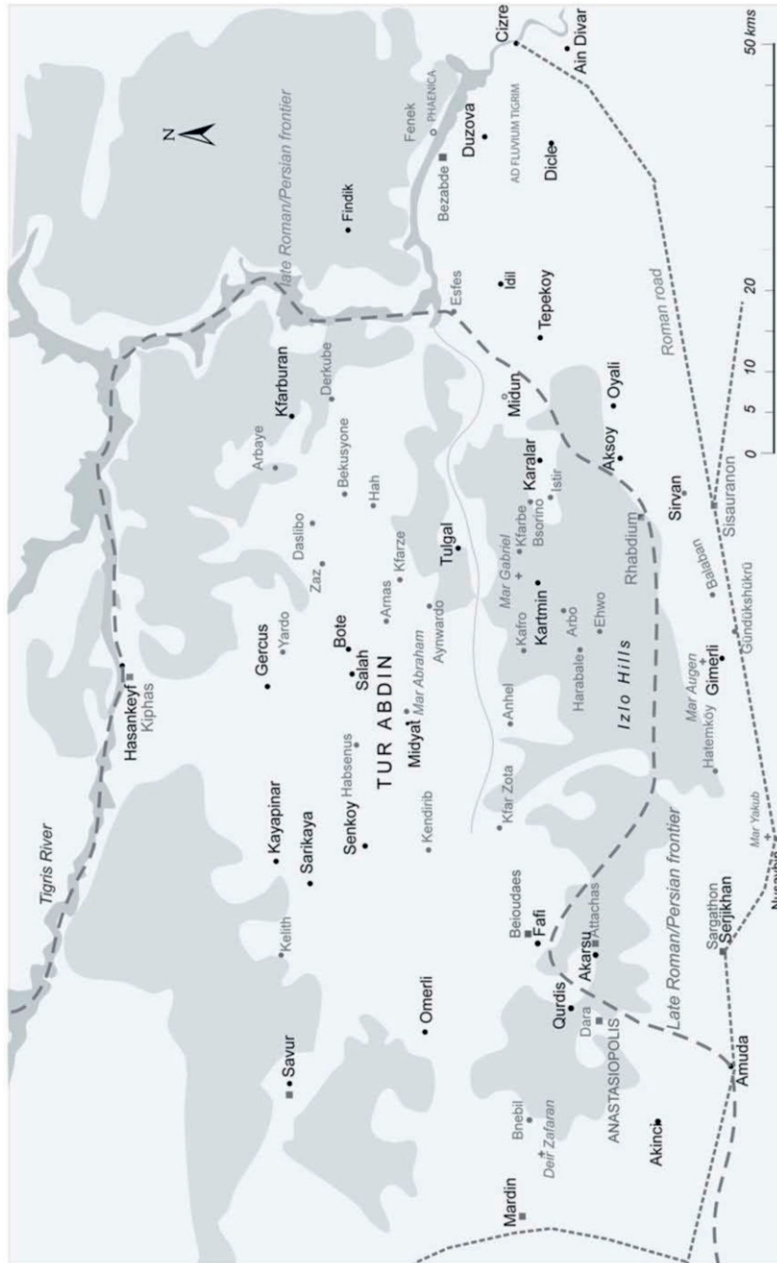


Figure 10: Dara and the Tur Abdin

Conclusions

The loss of Nisibis to the Persians in the mid-fourth century had endangered Rome's salient west of the Tigris. Anastasius realised that without a formidable stronghold in the area, Rome's position would continue to erode. Without Dara, there is little doubt that the Byzantines could not have maintained the rest of the Tur Abdin salient.

The Tur Abdin in turn was the key to their line of control in Mesopotamia and to the string of fortifications along the southern limits of the Anatolian highlands reaching back through Amida and Edessa. If the Byzantines could not harass an enemy as it proceeded west, there was little else between the Tigris and the Euphrates to delay an intruder using the well-watered northern route.

While Dara and the Tur Abdin formed one massive fortress, it is clear from the campaigns along the Euphrates, by contrast, that the defences of the southern route while often physically impressive were little more than nominal in terms of their blocking capacity. They were of little interest to Khusro unless they offered opportunities for booty. In spite of the huge amount of work put into the fortifications at Halebiye, for example, there was little the defenders could do if an enemy chose to ignore them.

Khusro then [after Circesium, 540] came near to Zenobia (Halebiye) but upon learning that the place was not important and observing that the land was untenanted and destitute of all good things, he feared lest any time spent by him there would be wasted on an affair of no consequence and would be a hindrance to greater undertakings, and he attempted to force the place to surrender. But meeting with no success, he hastened his march forward. (Procopius *Wars* II, v, 7)

Likewise, that ultimate frontier fort, Circesium, could easily be by-passed, particularly if it was lightly manned and unable to deploy any real threat beyond its walls.

To summarize, Diocletian's fixed line frontier (never fully realised) was replaced two centuries later by Justinian's more complex and flexible system. It, however, had a fundamental flaw that Justinian initially hoped to ignore – the vast empty spaces below the Euphrates where Diocletian had deployed his resources most thickly. Here the Byzantines hoped that federated and allied Arab forces would keep out invaders on Rome's behalf and backed their role with the reserve forces stationed in modern-day Lebanon and around Damascus and Palmyra. Procopius' *Wars* takes great delight in telling us how fickle the Arab allies proved to be.

South of the direct approach to Antioch, some patching was done at the end of Justinian's reign; for example, the locally funded initiatives at the manor houses of Androna²⁸ and Qasr ibn Wardan in central Syria. But in more marginal agricultural areas it was often the monasteries that took on the local role of providing protection for citizens within stone walls. Such measures, however, had little strategic importance though it was not until the next century that the fatal weakness of this front really came into play. Rome and Byzantium were not the first or last powers who failed to take Arab ambitions sufficiently seriously or to assume that their sensitivities need not be taken into account.

The logic behind Procopius' *Buildings* is therefore a false one if simply interpreted as 'good fences make good neighbours'. Taken with *Wars*, however, the message is more

²⁸ M.M. Mango, "Excavations and Survey at Androna, Syria: The Oxford Team 2000", *DOP* 57 (2002), 293–297; C. Strube et al., "Androna / al Andarin - Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen in den Jahren 1997–2001", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (2003), 25–115.

complex. Walls alone are not enough. Persian siege techniques were proficient enough to make it impossible for citizens alone to hold out, especially if supplies were low. But walls do provide immense advantage in terms of secure depots and refuge, helping a defending army to block any long-term occupation of territory.

Dillemann has over-stated Justinian's reliance on physical defences partly by overlooking the work done by Justinian's predecessors, particularly Anastasius – for example, at Dara and Resafe. Procopius' emphasis on physical structures in *Buildings* was, of course, simply an easy theme on which to develop a panegyric, but the logic behind it is frequently disproved in his own earlier account in *Wars* which gives a more rounded picture of events, underlining the necessary interplay between fixed fortifications and mobile resources in the form of field armies. At many points in *Wars*, it is quite clear that Belisarius well understood that fortresses were no use without sufficient fighting men to guard them. Conversely, whenever sufficient manpower could be put in the field, any army operating well beyond protected enclosures was dangerously exposed.

The logic of this military doctrine became even more evident fifty years after Justinian. When the Persians did decide on a permanent occupation of Roman territory (as opposed to campaigns intended mainly to seek tribute and booty), it required a much more systematic and painstaking approach to the taking of fortresses. It took four years (606 to 610) for the first crop of fortresses to fall to the Persians (Fig. 11) and another two years of sustained campaigning west of the Euphrates (611–613) to take the rest of Byzantine Syria. The answer to the question posed at the beginning of this paper is 'In the end, Justinian's fortifications did serve their purpose at the time though not enough to block a determined enemy who had learnt to mount a sustained campaign'. Following the Persian occupation, when the next threat, the Arab forces of the Hijaz, followed quickly thereafter (635–636), the fortifications fell in most cases with barely a fight after the Byzantine field army had been crushed at the Battle of Yarmuk (636).



Figure 11: Persian Invasion 606–613

Lynda Garland

Public Lavatories, Mosquito Nets and Agathias' Cat: The Sixth-Century Epigram in its Justinianic Context

Down gleaming walls of porcelain flows the sluice
That out of sight decants the kidney juice,
Thus pleasuring those gents for miles around
Who, crying for relief, once piped the sound
Of wind in alleyways...

Despite its place at the head of this paper, this is not one of Agathias' much-deplored poems on the public lavatory at Smyrna,¹ but Josiah Feable's celebratory ode written in 1855 to mark the opening of the first public flush toilets in London, which stood outside the Royal Exchange.² Whatever the perceptions of Agathias of Myrina's abilities as a poet – and he was not a “writer of the first rank” in the judgement of Averil Cameron³ – he was assuredly a finer poet in every respect than the Victorian exponent of the divine art, whose name so aptly reflected his abilities. Yet both poets present fascinating vignettes reflecting the society of their own times and this paper will argue that Agathias, along with the other sixth-century epigrammatists, is a veritable mine of information not only about attitudes and tastes in the mid-sixth century, but about the realia of life in the Byzantine capital at the end of the reign of Justinian and in the years following under Justin II.

This view runs counter to that normally held regarding the “relevance” of the Byzantine epigram to its social context. But, despite the long-held perception that the sixth-century epigrams in the *Greek Anthology* bear little if any relationship to real life, with the exception, perhaps of some of the descriptions of contemporary art (most notably hippodrome artifacts and the statues of popular charioteers), the enshrining of the details of contemporary life in celebratory verse, whether by sixth or nineteenth-century poets, reflects the very real interests and priorities of their societies. Indeed, Feable's ode to the first Victorian flushing urinal mirrors that written thirteen centuries earlier by Agathias on his, no doubt, equally welcomed gift of a public lavatory to the city of Smyrna (*AP* 9.662), the only difference being that Agathias' production was composed from the point of view of the donor, Feable's from that of the grateful recipients.

There has been much debate about the date of the publication of Agathias' *Cycle*. This paper adopts the reasonable and non-contentious view that, while the majority of the poems contained in the *Cycle* would have been written in the later years of Justinian, publication of the collection probably took place c. AD 567/8, in the early years of the reign of Justin II and Sophia,⁴ prior to Agathias' starting his *Histories*.⁵ The poems of the anthology relate to

¹ Agathias, *Anthologia Palatina* (*AP*), 9.642–44, 662; for Agathias' epigrams, see G. Viansino, *Agazia Scolastico, Epigrammi. Testo, traduzione e commento* (Milano 1967).

² R. Humphreys, *The Rough Guide to London* (New York 2005), 204. Ladies had to wait until 1911 for a public convenience. For attempts to assign Agathias' “lavatory” poems to other authorship, see A. Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford 1970), 2 n. 4; cf. “his (to some) lamentable lapse of taste”: *ibid.* 3.

³ Averil Cameron, *Agathias*, 1.

⁴ Note esp. B. Baldwin, “Four Problems in Agathias”, *BZ* 70 (1977), 295–305, and *idem*, “The Date of the *Cycle* of Agathias”, *BZ* 73 (1980), 334–340 arguing for a primarily Justinianic date of composition against Averil and Alan Cameron, “The *Cycle* of Agathias”, *JHS* 86 (1966), 6–25 and

Justinian and Justin II fairly equally: there are eight epigrams for each, with Sophia featuring as much as her husband Justin II,⁶ with many of the inscriptional poems referring to Justin and Sophia as an imperial couple,⁷ while Theodora is not entirely omitted: she may well be the subject of a poem eulogising the queen who "kindled a light for prudent men and broke up the civil strife caused by the battle-loving factions" (a reference to the Nika riot), as well as of a portrait described by Paul the Silentiary which he thought failed to do her justice.⁸ And so, in this collection, the celebration of imperium is clearly an important component.

Therefore, early in the reign of Justin II and Sophia, Agathias collected some 100 of his own epigrams and those written by his friends during the last few years and published them as the *Cycle*. While some of the sixth-century inscriptional poems by the same poets found in the *Greek Anthology* presumably entered the anthology not via the *Cycle* but from non-literary sources, Agathias stresses in his preface that he is including recent epitaphs by his contemporaries, as well as epigrams on statues and other works of art, and therefore inscriptional works are an important component of this collection.⁹ Agathias also tells us that he is explicitly focusing on recently composed epigrams: in his proem he speaks of serving up a meal "to which many new flavourings contribute",¹⁰ which he enlarges upon, in his *Histories*, by stating that he had made "as complete a collection as possible of those recent and contemporary epigrams which were as yet unknown and casually murmured on the lips of some, and had written them down appropriately classified and arranged".¹¹ In other words, the *Cycle* consisted of recently composed epigrams, known only to a cultured elite and now presented to a wider reading public. Furthermore, the lemma to his dedication for the collection (*AP* 4.3), which explicitly presupposes an audience, comments: "the proems (or preludes) were spoken as part of the frequent recitations given at that time", clearly implying that there had been public performance of these pieces, as well as circulation of a written text. Agathias' proem to his collection specifically states that he had been selective and that he was not intending to include all the works of his contemporaries: "I introduce a small portion from each poet just as a taste: but for the rest if anyone should wish to encounter all of them and have his fill, he must go and search in the market."¹² In other words, the *Cycle* is a selective anthology of recent works by Agathias' colleagues in mid sixth-century Constantinople, as well as by Agathias himself, for he modestly remarks

"Further Thoughts on the 'Cycle' of Agathias," *JHS* 87 (1967), 131; cf. R.C. McCail, "The *Cycle* of Agathias; new identifications scrutinised", *JHS* 89 (1969), 87–96; and see Averil Cameron, "Notes on the Sophiae, the Sophianae and the Harbour of Sophia", *Byzantion* 37 (1967), 11–20.

⁵ Agathias, *Histories*, ed. B.G. Niebuhr (CSHB: Bonn 1828), pref. 21, cf. 11.

⁶ Justinian: *AP* 1.8, 9.1, 9.7–8, 9.811, 9.820, 16.62–3; Justin: 1.2–3, 9.657, 9.658, 9.779, 9.804, 9.810, 9.812, 16.72; Sophia: 2.2, 9.779, 803, 810, 813.

⁷ *AP* 1.2–3 (Church of the Theotokos at Blachernae), 1.11 (Sts Cosmas and Damian), 9.779 (sundial in the arch of the Basilica), 9.803–4, 810, 812–3, 16.64 (statues of the couple), 9.657 (the Sophianae palace), 9.658 (the Praetorium); for Sophia and her role in government, see esp. Averil Cameron, "The Empress Sophia", *Byzantion* 45 (1975), 5–21, esp. 8–16; L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527–1204* (London 1999), 40–57.

⁸ *AP* 16.44 (anon), 16.77–8 (Paul); cf. works in honour of Anicia Juliana's foundations: *AP* 1.10, 12, 13–17.

⁹ *AP* 4.3.118–23.

¹⁰ *AP* 4.3.19–20.

¹¹ *Histories*, pref. 8.

¹² *AP* 4.3.38–41.

that he has “dared to make a slight contribution from his own resources so as not to seem a complete stranger to those whom he has brought together”.¹³

The poets who contributed to this collection were a self-contained group of some twenty literary figures, writing within the framework of and primarily dealing with features of their contemporary environment. Each has his own “signature” in his contributions to the *Anthology* and all are clearly of the higher echelons of the bureaucracy in the palace and capital – a close-knit inner circle. Significantly several of them feature as subjects of these *Cycle* epigrams as well as authors: Agathias is a friend and fellow-student of Rufinus (*AP* 1.35); Paul the Silentiary writes an epitaph for Damocharis, and Theosebia (our only female poet) for Ablabius (*AP* 7.588, 7.559); Theatetus Scholasticus praises Julian Antecessor (*AP* 16.32b); Leontius describes a portrait of the prefect Gabriel (*AP* 16.32a); Agathias and Paul the Silentiary address each other with affection when separated by the Bosphorus (*AP* 5.292–3); and Damocharis writes an epitaph for Agathias’ pet partridge (*AP* 7.206).¹⁴ Many were lawyers (*scholastici*): Agathias himself, a lawyer at Constantinople, had earlier in his career been curator civitatis (in charge of public works) at Smyrna, and yet was a prolific poet, with an early hexameter work on erotic and other themes, the *Daphniaca*, to his credit,¹⁵ while he was later to turn to the genre of history. The *Cycle*’s main contributors apart from Agathias consisted of other lawyers, such as Leontius Scholasticus, whose poems cover a wide range of contemporary Constantinopolitan realia – baths, portraits of officials and actresses, and statues of charioteers, with three featuring contemporary notables including the chamberlain or grand chamberlain Callinicus,¹⁶ and Gabriel the city prefect of 543 (*AP* 16.32a). Arabius, Eratosthenes, Marianus, Synesius and Theatetus were also *scholastici*, with other legal figures represented by Julian Antecessor, and Rufinus, who from having been a legal student, appears to have joined the *domestici*.¹⁷ Others had more active careers: Julian of Egypt, who had been praetorian prefect, perhaps in 530–531,¹⁸ and somehow involved with the faction of Hypatius during the Nika riot of 532,¹⁹ has some 80 epigrams to his credit, several on contemporary events or personalities.²⁰ Paul the Silentiary, a courtier from a noble and wealthy family (perhaps related by marriage to

¹³ *AP* 4.3.35–36. All translations are my own.

¹⁴ See also Theodore Proconsul’s poem on a deceased mime (*AP* 7.556), and Michael the Grammarian’s inscription for a portrait of Agathias and his family (16.316) may both have entered the *Anthology* through non-literary sources. Theodore appears to be the Theodore the proconsul whose portrait is described by Agathias in 1.36.

¹⁵ For this work, see Axel Mattson, *Untersuchungen zur Epigrammsammlung des Agathias* (Lund 1942); Baldwin, “Nonnus and Agathias. Two Problems in Literary Chronology”, *Eranos* 84 (1986), 60–61; *idem*, “Four Problems”, 353–355.

¹⁶ *AP* 16.33; see Baldwin, “Leontius Scholasticus and his Poetry”, *BSI* 40 (1979), 1–12; McCail, “The *Cycle* of Agathias”, 91–92.

¹⁷ A. & Av. Cameron, “*Cycle*”, 14, 19; for a list of major contributors, see *ibid.* 8.

¹⁸ Hendrich Schulte, *Julian von Ägypten* (Trier 1990); A. & Av. Cameron, “*Cycle*”, 12–14; K. Hartigan, “Julian the Egyptian”, *Eranos* 73 (1975), 43–54; Alan Cameron, “Some Prefects called Julian”, *Byzantion* 47 (1977), 42–64; S. Petofi “La produzione epigrammatica di Giuliano d’Egitto”, *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia* 29 (1996), 9–22; for his involvement with Hypatius, see Cameron, *Agathias*, 7.

¹⁹ *AP* 7.591–2; cf. 7.590 on a grandson of Hypatius (A. & Av. Cameron, “*Cycle*”, 13). McCail, “The *Cycle* of Agathias”, 87 notes that *AP* 7.592 is unattributed in the Palatine MS and that its satirical tone varies markedly from that of 7.591.

²⁰ *AP* 7.594–5 (Theodorus: cf. 606 by Paul the Silentiary), 7.597–8 (Calliope, cf. 16.218 by John Barbocallus), 7.587 (Pamphilus), 9.445 (Tetianus; cf. Procopius *Hist. Arc.* 12.5 for a possible identification).

Agathias – or more likely not),²¹ is best known for his commission to compose the lengthy hexameter eulogy of Justinian's restoration of St Sophia,²² and also has 80 or so epigrams in the collection, which are most notable for their depiction of erotic fantasies.²³ Cometaspas the chartularius and Irenaeus the referendarius were members of the imperial bureaucracy; Macedonius (who has 43 poems in the collection),²⁴ Cyrus and Theodorus, like Julian of Egypt, were honorary consuls; Ablabius was an *illustis* and apparently a doctor; and Gabriel a city prefect. Agathias' networks in the legal and other professions are obvious. Several of his works feature legal personages and two of his epitaphs, which were almost certainly inscriptional, were composed for two law students, Agathonicus and Eustorgius who died prematurely before they had qualified: the epitaphs read as if inspired by personal acquaintance.²⁵

Work on the hellenistic epigram has been prolific.²⁶ This is regrettably not the case for the Justinianic epigram which, despite some scholarly interest, especially in the 1960s and 1970s,²⁷ has generally been seen as a second-rate product and one totally removed from the

²¹ There is no proof whatsoever that Agathias was married to Paul's daughter: A. & Av. Cameron, "Cycle", 17–18.

²² Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis S. Sophiae*, ed. P. Friedländer (Leipzig 1912). See also G. Viansino (ed.), *Paolo Silenziario* (Turin 1963); Mary Whitby "The Occasion of Paul the Silentiary's *Ekphrasis* of S. Sophia", *CQ* 35 (1985), 215–228: the poem was perhaps delivered on 6 January 563. Paul also wrote a description specifically of the ambo: see R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, "The Architecture of Ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia", *BMGS* 12 (1988), 47–82; and cf. J.C. Yardley, "Paulus Silentiarius, Ovid and Propertius", *CQ* (1980), 239–243; Enzo Degani, "Paolo Silenziario e la poesia latina", in Luciano Cicu, Giovanna Maria Pintus and Anna Maria Piredda (eds), *Epigrammatica greca e latina. Atti del Convegno Internazionale organizzato da the School of Classics, University of Leeds e dall'Istituto di Filologia Classica, Università di Sassari, 18–19 aprile 1996* (Sassari: Gallizi, 1999 = *Sandalion* 20, 1997), 155–164; Marie-Christine Fayant, "Paul le Silentiaire héritier de Nonnos", in D. Accorinti and P. Chuvin (eds), *Des Géants à Dionysos. Mélanges de mythologie et de poésie grecques offerts à Francis Vian, Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 3 (2006), 583–592; Mary Whitby, "The Vocabulary of Praise in Verse Celebration of Sixth-century Building Achievements: *AP* 2.398–406, *AP* 9.656, *AP* 1.10 and Paul the Silentiary's Description of St Sophia", in *Des Géants à Dionysos*, 593–606; for the work's eulogy of Justinian himself, see Marie-Christine Fayant, "Le poète, l'empereur et le patriarche. L'éloge de Justinien dans la description de Sainte-Sophie de Paul le Silentiaire", in L. Mary and M. Sot (eds), *Le discours d'éloge entre Antiquité et Moyen Age* (Paris 2001), 69–78.

²³ Note especially *AP* 5.219, 221, 226, 230, 232 (a women's persona), 239, 241, 250, 252, 254–56, 258–60 and *passim*.

²⁴ B. Baldwin, "The Date of Macedonius Consul", *Eranos* 79 (1981), 145–146; J.A. Madden, "Macedonius Consul and Christianity", *Mnemosyne* 30 (1977), 153–159; *idem*, *Macedonius Consul, The Epigrams. Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Hildesheim 1995); cf. B. Baldwin in *Mnemosyne* 37 (1984), 451–453, for possible traces of Christian belief in *AP* 9.649.

²⁵ *AP* 7.574, 589; cf. epitaphs of Leontius on Rhode, the widow of Gemellus, a professor of law (even possibly one of Agathias' teachers), who moved to Constantinople for the sake of her children and "who should have lived for thousands of years", and the lawyer and judge Cheiridius from Attica: *AP* 7.575, 573.

²⁶ For hellenistic poetry as reflecting developments within its own society, see A. Garzya, "Retorica e realtà nella poesia tardoantica", in A. Garzya (ed.), *Il mandarino e il quotidiano* (Naples 1983), 75–112; for an exhaustive bibliography on the Greek epigram, see Martijn Cuyper, *A Hellenistic Bibliography: Epigram*. Last updated 3/25/2005: <http://www.gltc.leidenuniv.nl/index> (last updated March 2005).

²⁷ A. & Av. Cameron, "Cycle" and "Further Thoughts on the 'Cycle'"; McCail, "The Cycle of Agathias"; *idem*, "The Erotic and Ascetic Poetry of Agathias Scholasticus", *Byzantion* 41 (1971), 205–267. Primarily these works focus on the problems of identifying the *Cycle's* poets and their subjects: cf. Baldwin, "Four Problems" and "The Date of the Cycle of Agathias"; *idem*, "Leontius

daily life of the sixth-century Constantinopolitan, while comment on the sixth-century epigram itself has invariably been negative, with the *Cycle* of Agathias generally being seen as merely a sub-standard epilogue to the classical epigram,²⁸ and as totally divorced from the realities of Byzantine life.²⁹

But, without the *Cycle*, how would we know of the portrayal to a contemporary audience of the misdeeds of Agathias' cat?³⁰ Of the bliss accorded to sixth-century sleepers by mosquito nets?³¹ Of the inscriptions on contemporary gaming-boards?³² Or indeed of the details of that well-known public lavatory at Smyrna, considered important enough to be immortalised in inscriptional verse?³³

Rather than being seen as the last and dying gasp of hellenistic poetry, in many respects the Justinianic epigram should be viewed as the starting-point of a long and vigorous tradition. Innovation in hellenistic poetry is recognised.³⁴ Agathias' *Cycle*, in contrast, is seen as almost entirely retrospective: "their literary paganism is so thoroughgoing that we are astonished by the occasional use of the same style and vocabulary to described a Christian tomb".³⁵ Furthermore, as the Justinianic epigram has been seen as produced for a miniscule group of the literary elite, little work has been done on the actual *inscriptional* nature of many of the sixth-century works in the *Greek Anthology*, despite the clear evidence that many of these, like the epigrams of hellenistic times,³⁶ were specifically destined for appearance on public monuments or on privately owned artifacts such as manuscripts, icons and pictures. After all, an epigram initially was exactly that – an inscription on a monument or dedication explaining its purpose – and in the sixth century epigrams continued to be written for this specific purpose in Constantinople and elsewhere, with numerous examples composed by Agathias and his contemporaries.³⁷ In the sixth century, inscriptions also adorned monuments in provincial towns, such as Smyrna,³⁸ and

Scholasticus" and "The Date of Macedonius Consul", 145–146; Alan Cameron, "Some Prefects called Julian", *Byzantion* 47 (1977), 42–64.

²⁸ Alan Cameron, *OCD*, 536, s.v. "epigram, Greek", considers the works of the *Cycle* to be "a fusion of the traditional conventions and motifs with the bombast and metrical refinement of Nonnus".

²⁹ McCail, "Erotic and Ascetic Poetry", 205: "it does not in any full sense reflect the life of the period in which it was written. For the most part it repeats, with more or less ingenuity and taste the traditional themes of Hellenistic and Greco-Roman poetry." Note esp. M.D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres, Volume 1: Texts and Contexts* (Vienna 2003), 313–332, "There is no reason to believe that this kind of literature has anything to do with real life, genuine sentiments or particular persuasions. It is mere fiction, an exercise in the art of literary discourse." Significantly the *Cycle* only receives attention in one of the twelve chapters (chapter two) of Averil Cameron's *Agathias*.

³⁰ Agathias: *AP* 7.204, 205; Damocharis: 7.206.

³¹ Paul the Silentiary: *AP* 9.764, 765; cf. Agathias: 9.766.

³² *AP* 9.767–69; and cf. 482 on the famous game of backgammon once played by the Emperor Zeno.

³³ *AP* 9.642–44, 662.

³⁴ Marco Fantuzzi & Richard Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic poetry* (Cambridge 2004); cf. S. Tarán, *The Art of Variation in the Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden 1979); I. Galli Calderini, "L'epigramma greco tardoantico: tradizione e innovazione", *Vichiana* 16 (1987), 103–134.

³⁵ Alan Cameron, *OCD*, 536: "this was the end of creative writing in the genre".

³⁶ See Peter Bing, "The Un-read Muse? Inscribed Epigram and its Readers in Antiquity", in M. Annette Harder, Remco F. Regtuit & Gerry C. Wakker (eds), *Hellenistic Epigrams*, 39–66.

³⁷ Pace Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 132: "practically none of the verses published in the *Cycle* of Agathias serve any functional purpose", though in fact many of them are clearly inscriptional; cf. Cameron, *Agathias*, 18–26.

³⁸ Denis Feissel, "Gouverneurs et édifices dans des épigrammes de Smyrne au bas-empire", *Revue des Études Grecques* 111 (1998), 125–144.

poets continued to write verse to be inscribed on Byzantine works of art in monasteries and churches, and on artifacts such as statues, icons and books.³⁹ In fact, the Byzantine epigram, even more than its hellenistic predecessors, was primarily meant to be inscriptional.

In one of the most well-known of these sixth-century inscriptional epigrams Agathias eulogises Justinian's bridge over the river Sangarius (*AP* 9.641), an important contemporary construction, referred to by Paul in his ephrasis on St Sophia and so completed by the end of AD 562,⁴⁰ with Agathias' epigram quoted by Constantine Porphyrogenetos who notes that it was inscribed on the bridge itself.⁴¹ Other obvious examples of such inscriptional poems include the Justinianic inscriptions on charioteers such as the great Porphyrius, where the original epigrams have been discovered on statue bases in Constantinople, and have clearly been copied into the *Anthology* from the actual inscriptions.⁴² Eulogies of hippodrome heroes continued to be written by Leontius in particular (*AP* 16.357–78), and it is reasonable to suppose that he, and his contemporaries, were composing inscriptions to be publicly displayed on specific monuments. While often lengthy, these inscriptional epigrams are typical of their milieu: the *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of an epigram is a "short poem leading up to and ending in a witty or ingenious term of thought". Our sixth-century poets, however, show little appreciation of brevity, and their works seldom end in an incisive resolution.⁴³ This does not, however, rule out the fact that they may well have been publicly displayed on the subject matter of the eulogy. Later Byzantine epigrams could be very lengthy, even when actually inscribed on the objects which they commemorated: in the ninth and tenth centuries the longest extant epitaph comprises forty verses, while the longest inscription on a wall painting has twenty verses;⁴⁴ the longest book epigram, dating to the ninth century, has 102 verses.⁴⁵ The Justinianic epigram displays the same characteristic love of rhetoric and verbosity, most notably the lengthy (76 verse) inscription within the sixth-century church of St Polyeuctus, fragments of which have been found in situ,⁴⁶ with the first part (verses 1–41) comprising a

³⁹ Henry Maguire, "Epigrams, Art, and the 'Macedonian Renaissance'", *DOP* 48, 1994, 105–115; A.-M. Talbot, "Epigrams in context; metrical inscriptions on art and architecture of the Palaiologan Era", *DOP* 3 (1999), 75–90; M.D. Lauxtermann, *The Byzantine Epigram in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Amsterdam 1994), esp. 171–173 (no. 67: on Theodore the Stoudite); cf. Graham Zanker, *Modes of Viewing in Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (Madison 2004).

⁴⁰ Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis S. Sophiae*, 928–933.

⁴¹ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De Thematribus*, 1.27, ed. E. Bekker (Bonn 1840); for the bridge, see also Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 234.15–18, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1883); Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, 14.7, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst (Bonn 1897), 3.159.

⁴² *AP* 16.340, 342, 351, 352, 353, 356; see Alan Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford 1973), esp. 112.

⁴³ As noted by Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 22–23.

⁴⁴ Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Epigram*, 15.

⁴⁵ The MS of Sisinnius of Laodicia who commissioned the copying of 62 Homilies of Chrysostom: Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 31.

⁴⁶ *AP* 1.10; see C. Mango and I. Sevckenko, "Remains of the Church of St Polyeuctus at Constantinople", *DOP* 15 (1961), 243–247; R. Harrison, *Excavations at Sarachane in Istanbul* (Princeton 1986), vol. 1, 3–10, 405–420; Carolyn L. Connor, "The Epigram in the Church of Hagios Polyeuktos in Constantinople and its Byzantine Response", *Byzantion* 69 (1999), 479–527; Paul Speck, "Juliana Anicia, Konstantin der Grosse und die Polyeuktoskirche in Konstantinopel", in *Varia III* (Bonn 1991), 133–147. For other inscriptions from Byzantine churches, see *AP* 7.330, 327–8, 334–5, 337–8, 340. In the Palaiologan period the church of the Panagia of Panori at Mistra was inscribed with 87 verses: G. Millet, *BCH* 23 (1899), 150–154.

detailed eulogy on Anicia Juliana the donor of the church, and the second (verses 42–76) an encomiastic description of the church itself. When the *Cycle* authors play with and reshape earlier works, they display this new leisurely manner, passion for erudite detail and delight in exotic and pretentious linguistic usages. One example of this is in the sixth-century imitations of dedications by sailors to Priapus at the beginning of book ten,⁴⁷ ultimately deriving from Leonidas of Tarentum, and imitated by Antipater of Sidon and then Satyrus. The earlier epigrams on this theme from the third to the first-century BC number six or eight lines:⁴⁸ Agathias extends his treatment to ten (*AP* 10.14), and Theatetus Scholasticus' version reaches fourteen (10.16).

These were doubtless literary imitations of an inscriptional genre following ancient models. Other genuinely inscriptional works, however, like Agathias' poem on the bridge over the Sangarius, included epigrams on Justinian's foundation of the church of Sts Peter and Paul at Hormisdas, and a palace the emperor was responsible for building,⁴⁹ while Justin II and Sophia were commemorated in a poem which would have been inscribed on the apse of the church which Justin ("husband of Sophia") restored at Blachernae (1.2–3). Inscriptions written for statues erected in Justinian's honour are also included,⁵⁰ while Justin I and Justinian together are immortalised in poems inscribed on the dedications made by the consul Theodorus at Melite.⁵¹ Clearly such works reinforced imperial ideology in the capital; but while Justin and Sophia are frequently mentioned as dedicating or being commemorated through monumental structures, such works were not restricted to members of the imperial family or court and statues and portraits of Constantinopolitans of every social level were to be found in sixth-century Constantinople. Just as the epigram on Sophia's statue (9.813) is clearly meant for public display ("this statue of Sophia stands before the doors of Justice for Wisdom should not be far away from Justice"), so we should also assume that the funerary monument of the well-built young athlete Thyonichus, whose epitaph asks the passer-by to gaze on his physique and emulate his commitment to athletics, was a real statue and the epitaph a real epitaph⁵² – but more on this below.

Of course, not all poems which appear to have been inscriptional may have been so in practice. The demand for such material in Constantinople and its provincial capitals fostered an extremely competitive literary society and many epigraphic works must have been written and submitted only to be rejected. One such example may be the group of four poems, two by Agathias, one by Paul the Silentiary and one by Ablabius, celebrating the construction of a palace in a sea-side suburb, perhaps the summer palace that Justinian built for Theodora; it could be surmised that these were submitted for competitive examination and that only one of them may have been selected for public display.⁵³ Possibly a number

⁴⁷ On these, see especially Maria Ypsilanti, "An Aspect of Leonidas' Reception in Later Epigrammatists and the Art of Variation: the Case of Fishermen's Epitaphs", *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 67–73; cf. Marc D. Lauxtermann, "What is an Epideictic Epigram?" *Mnemosyne* 51 (1998), 525–537.

⁴⁸ *AP* 10.1 (Leonidas of Tarentum: 8 lines), 2 (Antipater of Sidon: 8 lines), 4 (Marcus Argentarius: 8 lines), 5 (Thyillus: 8 lines), 6 (Satyrus: 8 lines), 7–8 (Archias: 8 lines), 9 (anon.: 6 lines), cf. 6.33 (Maicius: 8 lines). Paul the Silentiary also keeps his imitation to 8 lines: *AP* 10.15.

⁴⁹ *AP* 1.8: on the church of Sts Peter and Paul at Hormisdas: the dedication, like that still extant in Sts Sergius and Bacchus, would have been displayed in situ; cf. 9.811 (the palace), and 1.91 on a monument erected to Justinian and Theodora at Ephesos; cf. Justinian's monument recording victory over the Bulgars: Brian Croke, "Justinian's Bulgar victory celebration", *BSI* 41 (1980), 188–195.

⁵⁰ *AP* 1.8, 1.91, 1.97–8, 9.811, 16.62–3.

⁵¹ *AP* 1.97–8.

⁵² Macedonius consul: *AP* 16.51.

⁵³ *AP* 9.665 (Agathias), 663–64 (Paul the Silentiary) and 667 (Arabius).

of the epigrams in the *Anthology* were not in fact destined for exposure on important monuments, but may have been “also-rans” – inscriptions which were never to see the light of day (except in print). That poems were commissioned from a number of rival poets is suggested at a later period by a collection of eight poems, clearly drafts submitted to a patron, on the silver bowl of Constantine Dalassenus, a governor of Antioch in the early eleventh century, who was also remarkable for twice having missed out on the chance of marrying the empress Zoe.⁵⁴

If we have established that the monumental inscriptional epigrams in the collection were intended for public display on buildings, houses and statues (or as Agathias puts it, “what we inscribed with our pens on some place, or on a well-made statue, or on other widely scattered toils of laborious art”: *AP* 4.3.118–20), then we have to consider the sixth-century epitaphs in the *Anthology* in the same light. The reader should not be misled by the stereotypical metre and expression (yet not so stereotypical as all that) into assuming that Agathias and his colleagues were merely embroidering hellenistic themes with no personal commitment to their subject matter. Certainly the *Cycle* poets considered that they were doing something new, as “begetters of new song”, and claim innovation, while at the same time seeing themselves as challenging their predecessors on their own ground.⁵⁵ The funerary poems are a good example of how they adapt the existing literary tradition to the circumstances of their own milieu and their friends and acquaintances, and Agathias clearly states that his collection contains “what god has allowed us to write on tombs in verse, but – doubtless in contrast to the works of old – keeping to the truth” (*AP* 4.3.122–23).

Of course, one of the characteristics of the epitaph genre is the comfort that the “known” gives to the survivors: yet for all this in these pieces there is individuality, nowhere more apparent than in the epitaphs for students and others connected with the law. The student Agathonicus, for example, Agathias tells us, had been studying diligently but was outwitted by Fate who (unlike Agathonicus) was not a skilled law student. Agathonicus should commend himself that at least he has escaped life and its “lawless” confusion. Similarly Eustorgius, from Antioch, now at the age of seventeen has turned to dust, but his bloom is now reflected in the colours and virtues depicted in his portrait and inscription on his tomb: and we must assume this is a real tomb, paid for and visited by his mother, in the vicinity of Constantinople.⁵⁶ So, while the funerary epigrams may appear to be conventional in sentiment and tone, there can be no doubt that they were written for real people, even for notorious political figures such as Hypatius, the unsuccessful figure-head in the Nika riot, who was strangled and thrown into the sea, but in whose honour Justinian apparently later erected a cenotaph.⁵⁷ Others commemorated include Theodorus the hard-working grammarian (*AP* 7.594–5), the mature twelve year old Macedonia (7.604), the mime Chryseomallus (7.563) and Joanna, the tenth muse and lyric singer of Constantinople and Alexandria (7.612), Rhodo, wife of the legal professor Gemellus who moved to Constantinople for the sake of her children and “who should have lived for thousands of years” (7.575), Plato the “Orphic” musician (7.571), Cheiridius, the incorruptible judge from Athens (7.573), and Agathias’ own mother who died when he was three (7.552), as well as his sister Eugenia, herself skilled in the honoured science of the law (7.593), and her husband Theodotus (7.596) – all these are connections of the *Cycle* poets and the emotions expressed at their deaths reflect the very real relationships of the poets with the deceased. In

⁵⁴ Edited by S.G. Mercati, *Collectanea Byzantina*, vol 2 (Bari 1970), 458–61; Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 42.

⁵⁵ *AP* 4.3.114–15, cf. 19–20; *Histories* pref. 8.

⁵⁶ *AP* 7.574, 589.

⁵⁷ Julian of Egypt: *AP* 7.591–92.

this genre we can perhaps even include Agathias' lament for his pet partridge – but more of that later in this paper.

And so, while inscriptional poems celebrating the benefactions of and dedications to imperial figures initially appear to dominate the discourse in this collection, our poets are also concerned with smaller-scale inscriptional works relating to privately owned houses, properties, and businesses belonging often to the poets' own acquaintances in the capital and provinces. In the works of our sixth-century authors we read eulogistic descriptions of parks and gardens in the suburbs or by the sea, houses sited on the hills of Constantinople with ocean views, on the beach, or in other more desirable locations,⁵⁸ and of the pleasures of institutions such as bathhouses – important sidelights on the amenities of Constantinople in the eyes of its occupants, whatever the literary relationship to their hellenistic models. These epigrams were doubtless publicly displayed on the building or on some part of the amenity. Leontius, for example, describes an inn, between the Baths of Zeuxippus and the Hippodrome, “a course for prize-winning horses”: the reader is exhorted first to watch the races, and bathe at the Zeuxippus and then “come here and relax in a meal with me / – then, in the afternoon, you will be in plenty of time for the second round of races / not having to go far from your room as it is just near-by”.⁵⁹ It is certainly not impossible to imagine this epigram publicly displayed as an advertisement for the establishment in question.

The same is true for the bathhouses featured by Leontius – a new small bath near the Zeuxippus, another near the public baths, and the longer established royal “hot” baths, fed from a natural spring, while Paul the Silentiary commemorates a double bath for men and women, where (appropriately) a “little door shuts out great Aphrodite”, segregating men from women; this however should not be regretted, continues our sixth-century poet in moralising vein, because where romantic love is concerned “hope is sweeter than the actuality”.⁶⁰ A further historic bath in the city of Smyrna, that of “Agamemnon”, is celebrated by Agathias himself in what is clearly another epigram intended to be inscriptional.⁶¹ Other elegant depictions of baths, populated by the nymphs, Aphrodite and the Graces, are penned by *Cycle* poets, and while these might of course have been archaising “literary exercises” there is no real reason to reject the assumption that they may well have been on display within or outside of bathing establishments: no owner would

⁵⁸ Paul the Silentiary, *AP* 9.651; Julian of Egypt, 9.652; Agathias 9.653, 677; Cyrus the consul 9.808: “Maximinus constructed me here in newly-built Rome, / fixing my secure foundations actually on the seashore. / Boundless beauty stretches all around me. / To the left, right and behind me I have the city; but in front of me / I see all the glorious works of the Bithynian coastline. / At the foot of my mighty foundations / the salt waters pour forth rolling towards the heavenly sea, / touching land just enough to wet its edge. / Many times a man has greatly delighted his spirit, leaning out from me / even slightly, and seeing various sights in different directions / – trees, houses, ships, sea, city, sky and earth.”

⁵⁹ Leontius, *AP* 9.650. An inn at Cibra, which welcomes everyone, is also celebrated by Macedonius the consul (9.648–9) with 648 certainly being inscriptional: “I always welcome citizen and stranger both – for to enquire / who, from where, and whose son is not the role of hospitality.”

⁶⁰ Leontius: *AP* 9.614, 624, 630; Paul the Silentiary: 9.620; cf. a poem on a bath restored by the emperor at Alexandria, Joannes (Barbocallus?): 9.628. On public and private baths in Constantinople, see C. Mango, “Daily Life in Byzantium”, *JÖB* 31.1 (1981), 338–341.

⁶¹ Agathias: *AP* 9.631: “I am a place beloved by the Danaoi, where on arrival / they forgot the art of Podalirius. / For after the conflict they healed their wounds in my streams / expelling the barbarian spear's poison. / Hence I increased in size and bear a roof, and as a mark of honour / was given the name ‘Agamemnon’”.

reject publicity which described his establishment as the one where Aphrodite bathed prior to her victory in the Judgement of Paris.⁶²

Portraits of officials of the day, especially when shown with their insignia of office, are another favourite subject for sixth-century epigrams, commissioned, like the inscriptions on privately-owned dwellings, to accompany the portrait: a picture of Thomas the treasurer (*AP* 16.41) dedicated by the new curators of the treasury; that of Longinus the diplomat described by Arabius Scholasticus (16.39, cf. 314); Theodorus of Ephesus, twice proconsul, shown receiving his insignia of office from an archangel (1.36); Joannes Barbocallus' piece on a picture commemorating the successful victory of Synesius Scholasticus against Chosroes (16.38); and an official portrait of Peter Barsymes, prefect and consul, from the pen of Leontius (16.37).⁶³ Leontius also describes two further contemporary portraits of officials, of Gabriel an eparch of Constantinople, and of Callinicus a *cubicularius* (or chamberlain), who is depicted as standing by the emperor's bedside as if lulling him to sleep, "sowing all gentleness in his ears."⁶⁴ Such portraits were a commonplace of life in Constantinople even in the streets and public places. Agathias himself was honoured by having a portrait of himself and his father and brother set up publicly by the city, and Michael the Grammarian was responsible for the inscription, in which the city ("like a mother for her son") is said to have bestowed on Agathias, orator and poet, in honour of his "double" eloquence, this portrait as testimony to its affection and his wisdom (16.316). Portraits of entertainers also decorated the city and its buildings, as did, it appears, those of members of the imperial family, such as the Empress Theodora (16.77–78).⁶⁵

As one of the great focal points of the city, the "theatre", or hippodrome, centre of entertainment in Constantinople and home of the city's "super-stars", features largely in the sixth-century works: on one occasion the "ever-smiling" Peter the orator fell to his death from the roof of the Hippodrome when upper tiers of seating apparently collapsed, and much debate has hinged on whether this was in fact Peter the patrician.⁶⁶ This is less important, however, than the information we can gather from this poem by Leontius of the popularity of performances in the overcrowded hippodrome and the dangers faced by the audience. The entertainers themselves were always highly publicised, though the epigrams describing the portraits of famous charioteers – Porphyrius and his rivals Ouranios, Constantine, Faustinus, and Julian – on the ceiling of the *kathisma*, the emperor's box, are of a later date.⁶⁷ But contemporary epigrams celebrate a range of sixth-century popular entertainers: not just charioteers whose statues – with inscriptions commemorating their victories – decorated the *spina* of the Hippodrome,⁶⁸ but also female musicians and dancers,⁶⁹ "mimes",⁷⁰ and even prostitutes.⁷¹ Many of these would have been publicly

⁶² Agathias: *AP* 9.619 (presumably a women's bath); cf. 623 (Cyrus), 625 (Macedonius), 626–7 (Marianus), 633 (Damocharis).

⁶³ Baldwin, "Leontius Scholasticus", 369; A. & Av. Cameron, "Cycle", 15. Julian of Egypt's work also features the incorruptible retired governor 'golden' Tetianus, who preferred a peaceful life to returning to his duties (*AP* 9.445).

⁶⁴ *AP* 16.32a, 33.

⁶⁵ For twelfth-century public portraits of empresses in Constantinople, see Choniates, *Historia*, 332–3 (Maria of Antioch).

⁶⁶ Leontius: 7.579; see for example, A. & Av. Cameron, "Cycle", 15–16; McCail, "The Cycle of Agathias", 91; Baldwin, "Leontius Scholasticus", 6 argues strongly against the Camerons' identification; see also P.T. Antonopoulos, "Petrus Patricius: Some Aspects in his Life and Career", in V. Vavrinek (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium* (Prague 1985), 49–53.

⁶⁷ *AP* 16.379–87; see Alan Cameron, *Porphyrius*, 188–206.

⁶⁸ *AP* 16.335–78.

⁶⁹ Leontius: *AP* 16.283–88; Agathias: 5.222; Paul: 16.277–78.

displayed, and in most of these cases what we have is a deliberate marketing ploy to advertise the performances of public entertainers. The inscriptions to accompany portraits of dancing girls, a favourite subject of Leontius, are of particular significance in showing the popular attention that was lavished on such performers: we have the girls' names, stage names no doubt – Helladia praised by two continents, who danced like the goddess of war, Anthousa favoured like Danae by Zeus' gold, Libania who frolics like Eros – all of these celebrated publicly by pictures in the city which these inscriptions were written to accompany as advertising text publicising their shows.⁷² Leontius was not the only author: John Barbocallus wrote couplets to accompany the portraits of performers called Polymnia and Calliope,⁷³ while Paul the Silentiary confirms that female musicians – the singers and kithara players – were also enshrined in public portraiture.⁷⁴ Agathias too writes in praise of the lovely Ariadne, a kithara-player and actress, who rivals both Terpsichore and Melpomene.⁷⁵ These were stars, equal in popularity to the charioteers of the time, as shown in Leontius' description of a portrait, doubtless serving to advertise the lady's abilities as a musician and dancer:

the tenth Muse, the fourth Grace, is Rhodocleia, / the delight of mortal men,
glory of the city. / Her eyes and feet are wind-swift, and her hands' / skilled
fingers outperform those of Muses and Graces.⁷⁶

Indeed, a poem of Agathias, in which he adopts the persona of a lonely girl kept at home, who envies the freedom of her male contemporaries at being able to roam the capital at will, confirms that such pictures adorned the streets of Constantinople to be ogled by the young men of the time,⁷⁷ and, perhaps more surprisingly, he also describes the portrait of a talented lady of "the streets", the skilled Callirhoe,⁷⁸ who is described as being a prostitute in Constantinople, granting her favours to all who paid for them. Her picture was actually painted by her lover Thomas, whose heart is said to be melting for her just like the wax of which her picture was made.⁷⁹ That these entertainers in general granted sexual favours to fortunate men is confirmed by Paul's description of the lyre-player Maria of Alexandria, with those men whom she favours being considered a second Anchises or Adonis, and thus implicitly depicting Maria as an embodiment of the flighty goddess Aphrodite (16.278); similarly, Leontius' dancer Libania wears the cestus of Aphrodite and sports like nimble Eros (16.288). Such performers were the toast of the soldiery and Agathias in his *Histories* comments that in Justinian's reign soldiers squandered their pay on prostitutes, charioteers

⁷⁰ AP 7.556, 563.

⁷¹ AP 16.80.

⁷² AP 16.283–8 (with Helladia in 16.284 being a statue in the Sosthenion); McCail, "Cycle of Agathias", 92; Baldwin, "Leontius", 10. Procopius mentions dancing girls in his *Secret History*: Antonina's mother (*Hist. Arc.* 1.12); two friends of Theodora called Chrysomallo (17.34–5); Macedonia at Antioch (12.28–9); and cf. 26.8–9; Malalas, *Chronicle*, 417 (trans E. and M. Jeffreys and R. Scott [Melbourne 1986]); and Socrates, *HE* 7.13.

⁷³ 16.218–19; the singer Calliope, subject of Julian of Egypt's epitaphs, may not have been a professional performer: 7.597–8.

⁷⁴ Paul: AP 16.277 (unnamed), 278 (Maria of Alexandria).

⁷⁵ Agathias: AP 5.222.

⁷⁶ AP 16.283.

⁷⁷ AP 5.297.5–6: "they can roam the streets, their eyes turning from one picture to another" (a girl is speaking).

⁷⁸ The term skilled, πολυδαίδαλος, is an Homeric construct: see esp. *Iliad* 23.743.

⁷⁹ AP 16.80.

and the factions.⁸⁰ We must assume that Justinian too may have had a taste for such entertainment, considering his marriage to that famous performer Theodora, and prostitution in sixth-century Constantinople is well documented.⁸¹

Bearing in mind that actresses and other hippodrome performers (who performed sexual services like prostitutes) could be publicly portrayed and eulogised in the *Cycle's* epigrams, we may make further deductions about the explicitly erotic poetry which features in the *Cycle*, and of which Paul the Silentiary was the greatest exponent. If the actresses, dancers and musicians featured in the epigrams were real sixth-century super-stars, whose pictures adorned the streets of Constantinople in an attempt to attract an audience, it makes it more likely that the ladies of easy virtue named as Dorises (5.230), Chrysillas (5.253), Philinnas (5.258), Galatias (5.256), Rhodanthes (5.237, 285), Rhodopes (5.219, 228, 249), Laises (5.250, 302), and Chariclos (5.259, 288), who populate the love poetry of our sixth-century epigrammatists, were not the ghosts of ancient literary sparks, but real-life ladies of the Constantinopolitan demimonde, well-known characters in elite circles, and as real as Theodora and Antonina and their professional contemporaries in the reign of Justin I. And if this is so, such liaisons were tacitly accepted: after all Paul was granted the commission to write the *ecphrasis* for St Sophia, despite the explicitly erotic elements in his poems. After all other "real-life" characters that are featured in the *Cycle* come from a wide range of backgrounds and professions: doctors,⁸² musicians,⁸³ a vintner,⁸⁴ even a diviner⁸⁵ and a slave,⁸⁶ and numerous lawyers in their own milieu⁸⁷ – perhaps literary constructs satirising professional 'types', or possibly the poets' contemporaries and acquaintances, and even professional associates, in the capital.

In terms of day-to-day life in Constantinople, the *Cycle* poems provide unique and convincing details otherwise unrecorded. Perhaps the most intriguing and irrefutable proof of this can be found in the poems describing icons and iconographic dedications.⁸⁸ As Kitzinger first noted, in the *Cycle* we have possibly the earliest reference to icon-veneration in Byzantium, with, moreover, iconophile arguments adduced to justify the practice, suggesting that it was a recent development and thus partly suspect by the church establishment.⁸⁹ Agathias himself describes his own dedication, along with three friends, of an encaustic icon of St Michael in the church of St Michael at Sosthenion outside Constantinople on the occasion of their having successfully graduated from the fourth year of their legal studies.⁹⁰ The four friends, Aemilianus of Caria, John, Rufinus of

⁸⁰ Agathias, *Histories*, 5.14.4.

⁸¹ Even if we discount many of the details of the adventures of Theodora and Antonina as described by Procopius in his *Secret History*, there is ample evidence for prostitution in the capital and for Theodora and Justinian's concern with the problem: John of Ephesus, *Lives, Patrologia Orientalis*, 17.188–189; *Nov. J.* 14.1 (AD 535); Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.2–10; Malalas 440–441; see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, 15–18.

⁸² *AP* 16.272 (Iamblichos); 7.559 (Ablabius), the subject of our only *Cycle* poem by a female poet, Theosebeia.

⁸³ *AP* 11.352 (Androtion), 7.571 (Plato).

⁸⁴ Macedonius: on Lenagoras who dedicates a satyr to Bacchus: *AP* 6.56.

⁸⁵ Agathias: *AP* 11.365; for a similar satirical poem on a philosopher, see 11.354.

⁸⁶ For Zosime, "who was never a slave except in body", see *AP* 7.553.

⁸⁷ For example, *AP* 16.32b, 7.573 (Cheiridius, an advocate and judge from Athens), 574, 575 (Rhode, the wife of the law professor Gemellus), 589; cf. 11.350: a lawyer guilty of malpractice.

⁸⁸ W. Hörandner, "Epigrams on Icons and Sacred Objects. The Collection of Cod. Marc. gr. 524 once again", in Marcello Salvatore (ed.), *La poesia tardoantica e medievale, Centro internazionale di studi sulla poesia greca e latina in età tardoantica e medievale. Quaderni 1* (Alessandria 2001), 117–124.

⁸⁹ E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of the Images in the Age before Iconoclasm", *DOP* 8 (1954), 139.

⁹⁰ Agathias: *AP* 1.35; cf. 1.1 inscribed in St Sophia to celebrate the restoration of icons in 867.

Alexandria,⁹¹ and Agathias “of Asia”, have dedicated, he says, “this painted image” in the hope that St Michael might ensure that “their future might be fortunate” and that the archangel will interest himself in assisting their future careers. A further piece on another encaustic icon of the archangel on the island of Plate explicitly justifies icon-veneration, which in the mid-sixth century was still an emerging phenomenon in the Byzantine church, with an epigram written to accompany the dedication of the icon. Here Agathias apologises for the donor’s presumption in venturing to depict the “un-seeable” and “incorporeal” archangel in an icon – “how daring was the wax that shaped him!” – but explains that in this way a viewer looking at the icon thus “guides his mind with a more precise perception”: the viewer’s veneration of the archangel is no longer “confused”, for he has imprinted the archetype in himself and fears him as if he were present, since “the eyes quicken the depths of the mind; Art knows how to convey through colours the entreaties of the heart” (1.34).

A third poem, inscribed on the narthex of the Church of St John at Ephesus and also ascribed to Agathias, describes a picture of Theodore the *illustris* receiving his insignia of office from the archangel. The poem again asks the archangel to forgive them for depicting his “un-seeable” face, this portrait having been dedicated in gratitude for his having granted Theodore (the “illustrious and twice proconsul”) the rank of *magister officium*. Theodore is here returning his thanks for this favour by representing the archangel’s beauty “in colours”.⁹² Here, therefore, we see, clearly documented, new trends in practices and Christology in the mid sixth century, supported by the brief epigram of another *Cycle* poet, Nilus Scholasticus, on a picture of an archangel: “how daring it is to portray the incorporeal! – yet the icon / leads us upwards to the spiritual remembrance of heavenly beings” (1.33).

There need be no further discussion as to whether the authors of the *Cycle* were Christian, as the reiteration of contemporary moral standards clearly forms an integral part of their epigrams, but it is worth stating again that their poems clearly reflect conventional standards of the day: one of the greatest innovations in tone and content in the *Cycle* is, of course, the overarching Christian morality displayed in these epigrams. Despite the often pagan themes (such as offerings to pagan deities), the *Cycle*’s poets live in a world dominated by Christian standards.⁹³ Not just the first book of the *Cycle* (the specifically “Christian” epigrams), but the entire collection is underpinned by contemporary morality, and we should remember especially in this regard Justinian’s edicts on homosexuality, for which the death penalty was prescribed.⁹⁴ Love in the *Cycle* is more often than not an occasion for moralising,⁹⁵ pederasty and homosexuality are seen as bestial;⁹⁶ all sexual

⁹¹ Perhaps another contributor to the collection: Rufinus Domesticus, *AP* 5.284.

⁹² *AP* 1.36: ἄσκοπος is used by Agathias to describe the archangel in both 1.34 and 1.36. This poem was possibly copied in situ and McCail, “The *Cycle* of Agathias”, 93 argues that it was therefore not part of the original *Cycle*. This Theodore appears to have been *magister officiorum* in 566 (A. & Av. Cameron, “Cycle”, 22).

⁹³ As recognised by Cameron, *Agathias*, 16–17, 105; McCail, “Erotic and Ascetic Poetry”.

⁹⁴ W. Hörandner, “Customs and Beliefs as Reflected in Occasional Poetry. Some Considerations”, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 12 (1987), 235–247; Baldwin, “Notes on Christian Epigrams in Book One of the Greek Anthology”, in P. Allen & E. Jeffreys (eds), *The Sixth Century. End or Beginning?* (Brisbane 1996), 92–104; A. Kominis, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν ἐπίγραμμα καὶ οἱ ἐπιγραμματικοί* (Athens 1966).

⁹⁵ For example *AP* 5.273 (Agathias) on the transience of beauty.

⁹⁶ Eratosthenes Scholasticus: *AP* 5.277; Agathias: 5.278, 10.68; cf. McCail, “The *Cycle* of Agathias”, 95–96 for comparison with the themes of Justinian’s legislation, esp. *Nov.* 77 and 141, where the punishment is death.

relationships, even on occasion marriage, are condemned (masturbation is the best solution);⁹⁷ life-long chastity is eulogised;⁹⁸ marriage can only be ended by death, not divorce;⁹⁹ adulterers meet their just deserts (often with humorous undertones, with the punishment fitting the crime);¹⁰⁰ beauty and love are transient and worthless;¹⁰¹ and gluttony and excessive gambling are targeted as socially unacceptable.¹⁰² However, love of women is a "small" evil, as opposed to pederasty: "look at the race of unreasoning beasts: of all of them / not one of them dishonours the laws of sexual union / – for the female is joined with the male. But trouble-bringing / men introduce an unnatural union with each other."¹⁰³ And Eratosthenes Scholasticus sums up the general viewpoint: "Virginity's treasures are beautiful; but if virginity / was observed by everyone life would come to an end. / So take a wife lawfully, and give the world / a mortal to replace you – but avoid licentiousness!" (9.444).

Clearly not only are many of the characters in the sixth-century poems "real", and the setting that of sixth-century Constantinople,¹⁰⁴ but, more than this, the Justinianic epigrams are awash with homely themes and details of daily life, down-to-earth actualities, with inscriptions written to adorn such items as water-clocks (9.782), sun-dials (9.779), a magistrate's axe (9.763), drinking-cups (such as the one given by Paul to his unmarried daughter Aniceteia),¹⁰⁵ writing-sets,¹⁰⁶ and backgammon boards,¹⁰⁷ which didactically relate dicing to mortal life since both suffer the uncertainties of fate: that these pieces could have been written for specific objects is confirmed by the fact that inscribed gaming-boards have been found at Rome.¹⁰⁸ There is even a poem by Gabriel on a pepper-pot decorated with a sleeping Eros (16.208) which has its own short and pithy inscription: "Neither when asleep, or lifeless, or at the feast / is Love without his inflaming bite." No item was so small that it could not address or edify its user.

In regard to one such modest artifact, Agathias and Paul display great subtlety; this is in their descriptions of the usefulness of mosquito nets, a necessary appendage as any visitor

⁹⁷ Agathias: *AP* 5.302, where despite the borrowings from 9.359 the poem is entirely sixth-century in its perceptions.

⁹⁸ Leontius on the doctor Iamblichus: *AP* 16.272; Eratosthenes: 9.444.

⁹⁹ Julian of Egypt: *AP* 7.605.

¹⁰⁰ Agathias: *AP* 7.572: "A man used to secretly take his pleasure in illicit liaisons, / stealing secretly into the bed of another man's wife. / Unexpectedly the house's roof fell in and the guilty parties / were buried while still conjoined. / A common snare now holds them both; and both together / now lie in an embrace which will never end."

¹⁰¹ For example, Macedonius' double entendre on an elderly courtesan (5.271): "The girl who once ran riot among others of her sex, with her golden 'castanets' displaying her fine jewellery, / is now possessed by old age and pitiless disease. Her lovers, / who once met her so eagerly, / now shudder at the sight of her; and that waxing moon / has waned away since it no longer comes into 'conjunction' (*synodos*)".

¹⁰² Agathias: *AP* 9.642–43, 9.767–69

¹⁰³ Agathias: *AP* 10.68

¹⁰⁴ For poems relating to provincial centres, see for example *AP* 9.425–26, John Barbocallus' description of earthquakes at Berytos (Beirut) in Syria in AD 554.

¹⁰⁵ *AP* 9.770: "Aniceteia moistens her golden lip on me; / may I also give her her bridal drink!"; cf. Julian of Egypt on a cup decorated with swimming fish (9.771).

¹⁰⁶ *AP* 6.63–68: pencils, pumice, knife, sharpener, whet-stone, ruler, ink and inkstand, pens and sponge; these epigrams, written by Damocharis, Paul the Silentiary and Julian of Egypt in imitation of Philippus of Thessalonica (*AP* 6.62) purport to be retirement dedications to Hermes or the Muses and do not appear to be inscriptional, though they may have been inscribed on a retirement present.

¹⁰⁷ *AP* 9.767–69; and cf. 482 on a famous game of backgammon once played by the Emperor Zeno.

¹⁰⁸ *AP* 9.768; McCail, "Erotic and Ascetic Poetry", 233 n. 4.

to Constantinople in the summer can verify. While, presumably, these poems were not inscriptional, as it is difficult to conjecture where one could put an inscription on a mosquito net, we are informed here of one of the vital aides to comfortable summer siestas, with Paul eulogising that, in catching these creatures who “want to be caught” (as opposed to the usually unwilling prey of hunting nets), the net’s defensive art “keeps a man who wants to avoid the sting of flies from being eaten alive as he enjoys his after-lunch siesta”, and therefore saving the slaves (a commodity often forgotten as having existed in Christian Constantinople) the job of chasing them away. Thus the nets in this case prevent the hunter from feasting on his prey, rather than aiding his blood-thirsty desires of catching his victims. In another epigram Paul considers the net not as an attribute of Artemis the huntress, but of tender Aphrodite, since those protected by the mosquito net may pursue other agendas without interruption (9.764, 765). Agathias goes one better: not only does his net repel rather than attract its prey, but it is magnanimous enough not only to allow the beds’ occupants to sleep in peace, but to preserve the insects’ lives as well – could anything be more “righteous” than that? (9.766). It would be difficult to find anything more down-to-earth than a light-hearted appreciation of such a timeless and useful amenity.

Companion animals also feature in the *Cycle*: epitaphs written for pets, such as domestic dogs, were not uncommon in hellenistic times (7.211, 304), and Macedonius consul writes not only of a statue of a dog so lifelike that it looked as if it were barking, but of a dedication to Pan and the Dryads comprising a hound, bag, and hunting-spear – except that once the dedication has been made the dedicator will take his dog back home with him to “share his dry crusts”: the dog no longer hunts but in his old age is still a welcome companion (6.175–6). A number of hellenistic epitaphs feature pet birds (7.191, 202–3),¹⁰⁹ and the custom of keeping pet birds to adorn gardens was still in vogue in Constantinople. Agathias himself had a pet partridge, “a fugitive from the rocks”, which lived in a wicker cage, but whose existence was terminated suddenly as the result of an unfortunate incident: “no longer does your woven house keep you in its slender osiers / nor in the sparkling of bright-eyed Dawn do you shake the tips of your sun-warmed wings” – and why? The resort to bathos is immediately appreciated by any pet owner – “The cat bit your head off!” Agathias then has to explain to his reader how he had to drag the rest of the pathetic corpse away from this blood-thirsty feline to stop her devouring the rest of its remains.

The humour inherent in the situation is stressed by the inversion of the classical prayer that the dust may lie lightly on this old friend – in this case the dust has to lie not lightly, but *heavily*, or the cat will be sure to disinter whatever rest of the bird’s corpse.¹¹⁰ In a further epigram on this incident, Agathias rhetorically enquires of the cat whether she now expects to remain living in his halls? He answers this himself – no! To honour his dear, dead partridge and quiet its ghost, he will slay the cat over the partridge’s remains, following the example of Pyrrhus’ slaughter of the Trojan princess Polyxena over Achilles’ tomb. A final twist to the joke is given by Agathias’ supposed student and friend, the grammarian Damocharis of Cos, who calls the cat in its rapacity “wickedest of cats, rivalling that man-eating pack, / you are one of Aktaion’s hounds!” This cat, he says, has grieved Agathias just as much as if she had ravenously attacked him instead of his partridge. But there is however one mitigating and rather ironic consequence of her

¹⁰⁹ Stella Georgoudi, “Funeral Epigrams for Animals”, *Archaiologia* 11 (1984), 36–41 (in Greek with summary in English).

¹¹⁰ *AP* 7.204; J.W. Hewitt was the first to discuss the humour inherent in this little piece: see “The Humor of the Greek Anthology”, *Classical Journal* 17:2 (1921), 68–69. For cats in the ancient world, see D. Engels, *Classical Cats: the Rise and Fall of the Sacred Cat* (London 1999), 38–137, and 148–49 for a short synopsis of the cat in Byzantium.

rapacity: after her inroads on the partridge, puss no longer wants to eat anything else, and, so taking advantage of her distraction, the mice are now having a wonderful time as they run off with her titbits!¹¹¹

Inevitably the Justinianic epigram also tackles the genre of *skoptika*, which comprise book eleven of the *Greek Anthology*, with Agathias in particular poking fun in lengthy epigrams at a number of stereotypical professionals (philosophers, musicians, farmers, doctors and lawyers).¹¹² With regard to a philosopher Nikostratus (that "second Aristotle") he shows him being consulted as to the nature of the soul and whether it is immortal, incorporeal and apprehensible, or the opposites of these (11.354). Nikostratos' reaction is to consult Plato's *Phaedo* and Aristotle's *de anima*, stroke his beard, gather his cloak around him and reply with true Socratic modesty (to hide his real ignorance) that he knows nothing, but if his interlocutor is in a hurry, he can find out by committing suicide. Similarly a pompous doctor named Callignotus, "who never foretold anything but what was going to happen", is targeted when called in to treat a bad case of pleurisy.¹¹³ He follows the proper Hippocratic method of observation, noting the four main symptoms of pleurisy, and solemnly gives his prognosis that if the symptoms disappear his patient won't die of pleurisy, advising him however to call his lawyer and apportion Callignotus a third of his estate in return for this advice. A further bombastic ignoramus appears as Aristophanes the astrologer, who consults his tray of pebbles and advises his client, the farmer Calligenes, that if his grain escapes frost, hail, animals and all other injuries he will have an excellent harvest – provided it is not attacked by locusts!¹¹⁴

There are also examples of personal insult: Julian Antecessor writes of one unfortunate, "You have a face just like an ostrich. Did Circe / give you a potion to drink and change your nature into that of a bird?" (11.367). And again, to a dwarf, "Live in safety in the town, lest you be pecked / by the stork who delights in the blood of Pygmies" (11.369). Misogynistic poems too appear, with a protagonist described by Macedonius hoping against hope that the fact that he sneezed near a tomb was a sign that his wife had died, and Julian of Egypt describing a husband who built an expensive and ornate tomb for his wife as thanks for the fact that she died early and gave him his freedom (11.375, 7.605). Insults of this type, depending on a person's appearance and deformities or personal habits, are typical of the *Philogelos* and later Byzantine humour, which tends towards derisive mockery, rather than the subtler forms of irony, and were clearly part of the Justinianic circle's repertoire.

It is in this context that we finally return to Agathias' poems on the public lavatory at Smyrna.¹¹⁵ Despite the critical comments of some earlier scholars, these works are quite typical of their time and, while in the form of the classical epigram, display the robustness of approach to life typical of later Byzantine epigrams, where farting, diarrhoea and excrement generally are considered to be highly amusing in the right context (that is, when

¹¹¹ *AP* 7.206; cf. for Damocharis 7.588.

¹¹² See for example, *AP* 11.352, 354, 365, 376.

¹¹³ *AP* 11.382; for doctors as a subject for ridicule, see esp. M. Plastira-Valkanou, "Agathias *AP* 11.382. Corruption and ostentation. An Epigram Deriding a Physician", *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003), 590–97; J. Duffy, "On an Epigram of Agathias (*AP* XI 382)", *American Journal of Philology* 104 (1983), 287–94; Alan Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford 1993), 67. For Byzantine satire against doctors, see also A. Kazhdan, "The Image of the Medical Doctor in Byzantine Literature of the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries", *DOP* 38 (1984), 43–51; Baldwin, "Beyond the House Call: Doctors in Early Byzantine History and Politics", *DOP* (1984), 15–19.

¹¹⁴ *AP* 11.365.

¹¹⁵ McCail, "Erotic and Ascetic Poetry", 233: 'it is difficult not to feel an element of obsession in the reiteration of so squalid a theme'; and see also n. 227 n. 2.

they happen to embarrass someone else in public).¹¹⁶ *AP* 9.642–4 and 9.662 are all on the subject of the same public convenience in Smyrna, and the lemmatist identifies Agathias as the *curator civitatis* (superintendent of public works) who rebuilt the facility there, while one of Agathias' epigrams features the baths of Agamemnon in the same city (9.631). Like so many other epigrams by our sixth-century authors, these poems are also clearly inscriptional – in a civilisation which adorned with inscriptions all types of public monuments, such as palaces, inns, baths and houses (and more privately gaming-boards, pictures and pepper-pots), there is nothing inherently unlikely in similarly decorating a public lavatory, especially as there is archaeological evidence of other such occurrences.¹¹⁷ It was quite appropriate for Agathias to celebrate his refurbishing of the amenity in Smyrna with verses advertising his public spiritedness. In fact the similarity of theme between Agathias (*AP* 9.643) and the painted epigram from fourth-century Ephesus, the emphasis on the physical efforts needed to relieve constipation after too much rich food, and the moralizing conclusions and the parody of Homeric language in both,¹¹⁸ suggests that there was a tradition of such lavatorial compositions. In *AP* 9.643 the reader is amused by the plight of the headache-plagued glutton who is described by Agathias as pummelling his stomach to rid himself of the consequence of his excesses of the previous day, in contrast with the healthy labourer, whose only pains are hoeing and poverty, whose evacuation is swift and painless, with no need to massage stomach or thighs (9.644). The moral is simple: that rich foods (pheasants, fishes, patés all *θηβρωματομιξία* – “deceitful delight in eating made-up dishes”: a *hapax legomenon* as one might expect) are just a momentary pleasure, do you no good, and only end up on the compost heap after a quick (or not so quick) trip through the lower intestine. Homeric vocabulary further adds to the conceit and gratifies educated visitors to the lavatory with a sense of their learning and social superiority,¹¹⁹ with visitors, locals and rustics *thunderously* relieving themselves in this now renovated and didactic public amenity (9.662).

In conclusion, the inscriptional nature of many of the sixth-century epigrams is undeniable – whether on palaces, statues, monuments, churches, pepper-pots, cups, gaming-boards or lavatories. These epigrams promoted imperial ideology in their eulogies of the imperial couple on monuments in the capital and elsewhere; but they can also be used as valuable evidence for the cultural realia of life in Constantinople at that same period. These poems were included by Agathias in his *Cycle* as some of the most exciting works produced over the last few years by himself and his colleagues. It is clear that such compositions, dealing with inscriptions written on themes so far apart as an statue to the Empress Sophia or a portrait of the latest popular hippodrome artiste, and the dedication of a church or the presentation of a backgammon-board, were routinely to be met with in all aspects of daily life. In certain circles an inscription on a gift was as automatic a component

¹¹⁶ See, for example, the *Philogelos*, ed. A. Thierfelder, *Der Lachfreund, von Hierokles und Philagrios* (Munich 1968), 85, 176, 250 and 243 (the longest joke in the collection); Garland, ““And His Bald Head Shone Like a Full Moon...: An Appreciation of the Byzantine Sense of Humour as Recorded in Historical Sources of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” *Parergon* ns 8 (1990), 1–31; “Le comédie de Katablattas: invective byzantine du XVe siècle”, ed. P. Canivet et N. Oikonomides, *Diptycha* 55 (2001), 5–97.

¹¹⁷ McCail, “Erotic and Ascetic Poetry”, 227 n. 1 (a lavatory at Ephesus, dated to the fourth-century AD). Besides public conveniences are only squalid until you personally need one, as Josiah Feable realised. Women in both societies had to make sure they stayed within a reasonable distance of home, unless they had friends close by to provide such amenities; in Australian country towns this was not until the early 20th century.

¹¹⁸ *λάξ ποδὶ κινήσας*; cf. *Iliad* 10.158.

¹¹⁹ *AP* 9.662.4, *νηδὺς ἐπεγδούπει*; cf. *Iliad* 11.45 (*ἐπὶ δ' ἐγδούπησαν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη*).

as the objet d'art itself and commemorated a large number of life's changes, festivities and rites of passage. People in "educated" – that is, literate – circles must have been surrounded by objects that spoke in the manner of a modern gift card, and would have been appreciated in much the same way as a souvenir from Blackpool or Bondi, and perhaps more so in as much as they were personalized by the giver – or (an interesting thought here) might there have been a role here for professionals who wrote personalised dedications on objets d'art for the less literate?

"Columns and pictures and inscribed tablets give intense pleasure / to those who possess them" states Agathias in one of his proems.¹²⁰ Quite apart from the difficulties in finding something different to say each time in inscriptions to accompany gifts to colleagues, friends and family members, it must have been a tremendous challenge to write distinctive and apposite pieces for smaller artifacts such as cruets. There was, of course, clearly a great and probably very competitive demand for verses celebrating monuments and other public constructions; whether there was a market for more personalized works is open to debate. Certainly our authors composed many pieces that would have been intended, along with the object commemorated, for quiet enjoyment in the privacy of the home, to serve as a reminder of past friends, colleagues, and lifestyles as well as to showcase the literary ingenuity of a well-respected colleague or old family friend. From the highest imperial levels, with monumental works celebrating the imperial couple and their majestic largesse, down to the mundane advertising of the amenities of a local inn or bathhouse, we see epigrams illustrating the facilities of sixth-century Constantinople across a range of social levels.

If we have managed to clear the Justinianic epigram of being nothing more than a pale literary shadow of the works of earlier Greek masters, and made a clear case that these pieces actually reflected the concerns of life in sixth-century Constantinople, we might perhaps go one step further. Bearing in mind this tendency to commemorate every occasion of note by a poetic *tour de force* prominently displayed, there is maybe one further hypothesis we might consider: whether there might have been, in some shady corner of an upper-class Constantinopolitan garden, one or more plaques marking for the edification of the owner and his guests – and in passing to showcase the owner and his friends' facility in producing a verse for every occasion however distressing – the spot where a poor partridge was foully slain by an *imperious* fellow pet – the household cat.

¹²⁰ Agathias: *AP* 4.4.1–2.

Penelope Nash

Demonstrations of *Imperium*: Byzantine Influences in the Late Eighth and Tenth Centuries in the West.¹

In the year 972, in Rome, Theophanu, the niece of the Byzantine emperor arrived to marry Otto II, the son of the emperor Otto I, an event celebrated by an ivory carving of Otto II and his wife Theophanu, probably executed in Italy (Fig. 12). Christ in the centre rests his left hand on Theophanu's head and his right on Otto's. In contrast to older standing representations, here for the first time the ruler of the West and his wife are depicted together in the same size and same relationship to Jesus Christ.² Christ looks as though he is blessing their wedding and coronation. But is he really?

The arrival of Theophanu in the West as the bride of Otto II provoked mixed reactions. Some wanted to send her back home because, although she was the niece of the Byzantine emperor, she was not the *porphyrogenita* requested and expected. Nevertheless, Otto I agreed that she should stay and marry his son. The stay was a success. Thietmar remarked, "Although of the fragile sex, her modesty, conviction, and manner of life were outstanding, which is rare in Greece."³

This paper will skim lightly over this complex topic of Byzantine artistic influence in the West, merely touching on some aspects of architecture, manuscript art and ivory carving as depictions of *imperium*.

Byzantine influence in the West was not new. The renaissance of Charlemagne's court, centred at Aachen in what is now North-west Germany, embraced many Byzantine influences, although they were not the only influences on this court. Archaeological excavations show the Royal Chapel at Aachen in Charlemagne's time as flanked on the north and south of the Palace Complex by two basilical structures. At the east there was a small apse known from excavations which was later replaced by a Gothic choir. On the west, a large atrium, approximately 10 metres square, led into an aula, approximately 40 by 30 metres. The atrium and the aula were connected by a two-storey walkway approximately 120 metres long to an audience hall to the north. Its foundations are part of the present town hall. Until 1898, portions of the walkway were still visible.⁴

Roman and classical influences and symbols were also prominent. Theodoric's statue was placed in the palace area near the entrance to the Aachen complex, possibly between the audience hall and the palace chapel.⁵ According to Janet Nelson, Theodoric's stature "was of an imperial and Roman-Christian kind in a ceremonial setting with shades of

¹ I would like to thank Lyn Olson and Michael Nelson in particular for help with accessing sources for this paper.

² F-R. Erkens, "Die Frau als Herrscherin in ottonisch-früsalischer Zeit", in A.v. Euw and P. Schreiner (eds), *Kaiserin Theophanu: Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (Cologne 1991), 253; H. Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spuren der Theophano in der ottonischen Schatzkunst?" in *Kaiserin Theophanu II*, Pl. 23, 214.

³ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Ottoman Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. D.A. Warner (Manchester Medieval Sources Series, Manchester 2001), IV, 10, 158.

⁴ C.B. McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600-900* (New Haven-London 2005), 108-109 and Fig. 114, 108.

⁵ McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 127; B. Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology", *DOP* 41 (1987), 108.

Ravenna".⁶ A bronze eagle with outspread wings was set at the summit of the highest building, symbolising imperial power and Christian evangelism.⁷ A golden orb was perched above the drum of the dome of the Chapel.⁸

According to Einhard, Charlemagne's contemporary biographer in the early ninth century, Charlemagne's great piety and devotion to the Christian religion since earliest childhood caused him to build a particularly beautiful cathedral "decorating it with gold and silver, with lamps, and with lattices and doors of solid bronze. He was unable to find marble columns for his construction anywhere else, and so he had them brought from Rome and Ravenna."⁹ Alcuin, Charlemagne's leading scholar and teacher at the Carolingian court, described the Chapel in a letter to Charlemagne of 798: "We also talked about the pillars which have been set up in the wonderfully beautiful church your wisdom has prescribed."¹⁰ The pillars, which came from Ravenna, some of the lattice work and the general shape of the Chapel, are all still visible today.

There were certain Christian historical links to Israel, especially through the British and Anglo-Saxon connections of Charlemagne's court. At this time, the court's self-identification with Israel was being replaced by imperial and neo-Platonic links closer in time than those with Rome. Theodoric and Ravenna now served as models rather than Augustus. Yet, unlike Constantine and Theodoric, who had used spolia to protect monuments, Charlemagne brought spolia from Rome and Ravenna to underline the imperial succession and to guarantee the continuation of the Christian Roman imperial tradition.¹¹

In the Palace Chapel, an altar to the Virgin was on the eastern side. On the western side, Charlemagne's throne was placed on the second level. The bronze grill-work could be opened, as a small gate allowed the emperor an unimpeded view of the altar below and the dome fresco portrait of Christ above.¹² Similarly, Charlemagne's rooms in his palace were elevated so that he could look down upon the people and see everything that took place.¹³

Among other influences, Charlemagne consciously included those of Byzantium. The dedication of the Chapel to the Virgin was a Byzantine custom. Byzantine influences are also visible in the original Chapel architecture as in the four sets of main doors in bronze (Fig. 13). The primary door boasts two lions' heads surrounded by acanthus leaves act as door-knockers. The great bronze doors, cast in a single sheet, have markedly classical features, though no other model has been found which reflects the same influence. Beckworth argues that, at this time, Italian or northern artists did not have the technical ability to cast such large sheets. Even in the eleventh century, large bronze doors for Italian churches were cast at Constantinople. Bronze work in the West was generally undertaken by nailing small sheets to a wooden frame and only the doors at Mainz and Hildesheim,

⁶ J.L. Nelson, "Aachen as a Place of Power", in M. de Jong, F. Theuvs and C.v. Rhijn (eds), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden 2001), 220 with n. 15.

⁷ Nelson, "Aachen as a Place of Power", 220.

⁸ McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 109.

⁹ Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne", trans. L.G.M. Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (Harmondsworth 1969), III, 79.

¹⁰ Alcuin, *Alcuin of York, c. A.D. 732 to 804: his Life and Letters*, trans. Stephen Allott (York 1974), *Epp.* 80, 96.

¹¹ Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne", 109.

¹² McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 113, 120 and fig. 121. The dome currently holds the image of Christ as a restored mosaic but the original differed from the mosaic perhaps only in some details after the building of the Chapel.

¹³ Notker the Stammerer, *Life of Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis G.M. Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (Harmondsworth 1969), I, 30 (128).

which were undertaken in 1009 and 1015 respectively, are exceptions. Thus, the doors of the Chapel at Aachen could not have been produced by northern artists of the time and were, if made there, cast under Greek supervision.¹⁴

Charlemagne was conscious that, to revive Western art, he needed to look to the East for *exempla*, which were recognized as being superior.¹⁵ The palace scriptorium of Charlemagne produced the earliest of the Carolingian schools of illumination and began western figural art on the continent of Europe. The works of the "Court School" contain abundant gold, silver and purple, the last being in particular a symbol of imperial authority. The Godescalc Evangelistary, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, is the earliest manuscript of the Court School and was created on the order of Charlemagne himself between 781 and 783 as a commemoration of his visit to Rome for the Easter of 781. In this manuscript, the apostle Luke is shown holding a pen in one hand with the Gospel open and his head is tilted up towards his symbol, the Ox (Fig. 14). Luke and the other three evangelists in this Evangelistary are bearded, showing Byzantine influence. This portrait, like those of the other Evangelists in this Gospel, is set indoors.¹⁶

Another image from the Godescalc Evangelistary depicts Christ (Fig. 15). The figure is more formal than that of Luke with a background somewhat like a carpet. We can see elements of landscape and architecture together with flowers and ornamentation in the picture and around the frame: these lilies and roses are seen frequently in the sixth-century mosaics of Ravenna.¹⁷ The figure is much more rounded than that of Luke and stands out from the linear background. We can see the contours of the figure particularly in the drapery over the knee. The face, hands and feet are given more dimensionality by the light and shade in the flesh tones.

At this time, such bodily presence was new in the Carolingian North and, together with the direct gaze at the viewer, shows the debt to both Italian and Byzantine influences. Mutherich points out that the soft face and large eyes were already familiar from sixth-century ivory carvings and from mosaics at Ravenna and also from eighth-century Italian frescoes influenced by Byzantium. The implication is that the Carolingian artist was inspired by a tradition from beyond the Alps and possibly from a manuscript that Charlemagne brought back from his residence in Italy.¹⁸

The Gospel of Saint Médard of Soissons was executed later in the reign of Charlemagne, and the general decoration of the manuscripts contain different stylish elements – part Anglo-Saxon, part Late Antique and part from the influence of Constantinople. In this Mark is shown as a young man without a beard. He is placed between two columns joined by an arch – an antique device which is used to enhance the dignity of important figures. In this depiction, the lion has to bend over the curtain rail and the evangelist has to strain to look up, unlike the Godescalc Evangelist portrait, which is more intimate. In these figures, the folds are modelled by the shadows rather than by the highlights. The garments hang heavily

¹⁴ J. Beckwith, "Byzantine Influence on Art in the Court of Charlemagne", in W. Braunsfels and H. Schnitzler (eds.), *Karolingische Kunst* (= *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 3) (Düsseldorf 1965), 299; D.W. Laging, "The Methods Used in Making the Bronze Doors of Augsburg Cathedral", *The Art Bulletin*, 49:2 (1967), 130; McClendon also argues for foreign workers: *The Origins of Medieval Architecture*, 113.

¹⁵ K. Weitzmann, "Various Aspects of Byzantine Influence on the Latin Countries from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century", *DOP* 20 (1966), 3.

¹⁶ H. Buchthal, "A Byzantine Miniature of the Fourth Evangelist and Its Relatives", *DOP* 15 (1961), 135, 137; Beckwith, "Byzantine Influence on Art", 297; E. Rosenbaum, "The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School and their Models", *The Art Bulletin*, 38:2 (1956), 82.

¹⁷ Rosenbaum, "The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School and their Models", 83.

¹⁸ F. Mutherich and J.E. Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting* (London 1976), 32–33.

and the folds sometimes look deeply carved. Over the rounded protruding parts of the body in particular there are short hooked folds which can be considered the landmark of this style. These do not occur in the Godescalc Evangelists. The heavy fall of the pallium over the shoulder gives a sculptured solidity compared with the simple and more cubic shapes of the Godescalc figures.¹⁹

According to Rosenbaum, the only parallel in book illumination to this figure style is to be found in middle Byzantine manuscripts. The drapery with broken folds and “hooks” can be seen in early Greek manuscripts,²⁰ though these are less exaggerated in most of the manuscripts of the so-called Macedonian Renaissance. The sculpturing of the figure, however, is very pronounced in the Macedonian manuscripts.

The tenth-century Mount Athos Manuscript *Stauronikita* 43, which has a strong architectural background, shows the evangelist Luke. Here the figures are very sculptural as in the Soissons Gospels and again we see the folds and hooks. The Evangelist portrait itself lacks symbols, showing a Greek influence, but the margins of some of the text pages are adorned with them.²¹ Yet, despite the different characteristics which distinguish the Court School from earlier Byzantine illumination, the features they all have in common point to a continuous line of development that ran right through the Iconoclastic Controversy. The relationship can only reasonably be explained by the assumption of similar models for both.²²

The Coronation (or Vienna) Gospels were also created under the same patronage as the other productions of Charlemagne’s Court School (Fig. 16). The painter of this portrait of St John was schooled in the same Hellenistic tradition of late antique painting – a foreigner summoned to the court of Charlemagne from south of the Alps. The detailed modelling of the form and drapery, the soft colours, the architectural background set in the open air providing a spatial niche for the seated Evangelist and the absence of the Evangelists’ symbols – all are representative of a strong eastern Greek tradition. Indeed, the margin of the first page of the gospel of St Luke contains the inscription *Demetrius Presbyter*.²³ Another confirmation of probable Byzantine influence is in the unfortunate flaking off of the pigment which is typical of some Byzantine manuscripts, though proof of the actual origin of this artist is unavailable. There exists no comparable Italian work of the later eighth century while the nature of the stylistic currents of art in the Greek East, embroiled in the Iconoclastic controversy, can only be a matter of supposition.²⁴

We turn now to another art form which recasts imperial images as Christian images – that of ivory carving (Fig. 17). This leaf is from the Barberini ivory and is one leaf of a five-part diptych. It dates to the second quarter of the sixth century from Constantinople. We can see the emperor on his horse in the middle flanked on either side by his two consorts (at least we can see one consort), while below are barbarians bringing tribute. The emperor is probably Justinian or possibly Anastasius I. He is looking straight at the viewer

¹⁹ Mutherich and Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting*, Pl. 6 and 44.

²⁰ Rosenbaum references Vatican Cosmos and Pris Gregory: “The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School and their Models”, 88.

²¹ H.R. Willoughby, “Codex 2400 and Its Miniatures”, *The Art Bulletin* 15:1 (1933), 133 and fig. 22.

²² Rosenbaum, “The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School and their Models”, 88.

²³ E. Kitzinger, “Reviewed Work: Die Karolingischen Miniaturen, iii. Erster Teil: Die Gruppe des Wiener Krönungs-Evangeliars; Zweiter Teil: Metzger Handschriften by Wilhelm Koehler”, *The Art Bulletin* 44:1 (1962), 63.

²⁴ Beckwith, “Byzantine Influence on Art”, 298, 299, and Plates XXXVI and XXXVIII between 292 and 293; Mutherich and Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting*, 48, 49, 51 and Pl. 8, 9 and 10 at 46, 47 and 50 respectively.

who is made very aware of his temporal power, while above him Christ is flanked on either side by angels. Note in particular the angles at which the angels are resting.²⁵

Figure 18 shows another ivory carving of an archangel, Michael, which harks back stylistically to one that is more refined than the Barberini diptych. This ivory, probably of sixth century origin, depicts a figure that is carried quite rigidly, but carved more finely. Here, the origin of the workmanship at Constantinople is not disputed.²⁶

The next image, one of the two book covers from the Lorsch Gospels (Fig. 19), comes from the Court workshop of Charlemagne from between 778 and 820. The same outline is used in this book cover as in the Barberini ivory. Mary is seated in the centre instead of the emperor; the consorts and the barbarians are replaced by historical biblical scenes. The Virgin is seated between Zachary and St John the Baptist, while below is depicted the Nativity and the Annunciation to the shepherds. The Virgin herself is seated with some measure of three dimensionality in the form of the robes over her knees. The figures on either side are more linear. Above, angels support a bust of Christ in a medallion, with the angles of the angels matching those in the Barberini ivory.

In looking at the figure of Mary in more detail, the carving is clearly more refined – much more like that of the Archangel than the Barberini ivory. Yet the originator of the Lorsch Gospels has carved the figures less rigidly than the carver of the Archangel with a more abstract treatment of the folds. Just as the fortress-like Palatine Chapel, at least externally, gives a very different impression from the spaciousness of its main prototype, the San Vitale in Ravenna, so the cover of the Lorsch Gospels only superficially resembles its Greco-Byzantine forebears. The Virgin herself is perhaps closest, but in the other carvings (and they do seem to be in different styles and may have been done by different artists) the draperies are flattened except perhaps for the knee of St John the Baptist. This may foreshadow Romanesque sculptures two centuries later. While the emperor from the Barberini ivory is looking straight at us, figures on the cover of the Lorsch Gospel seem to be looking more to the next world.²⁷

Moving forward two hundred years to around AD 1000, there are two more book images of significance. One of these is from Constantinople and shows Leo, Patrician and Treasurer, giving the bible to the Mother of God. He is reaching up to her and she is bending down to him to receive the book.²⁸ In an image from the Hitda Codex, Abbess Hitda on the left is handing over her Gospel book to St Walburga with the turning of the saint towards Hitda matching the iconography of the previous image of the Mother of God turning towards Leo. In this image, Hitda is the suppliant yet the artist has adapted the iconography and added her own since Hitda stands, unlike Leo, and is shown as less humble.²⁹

Two hundred years after the reign of Charlemagne, the Ottonian court included fewer Roman influences in its constructs of *imperium*. Byzantine influences were now more prominent in contributing to the Western imperial image. The Ottonianum of Otto I is an example of sumptuous ceremonial documents from the court of the Ottonians in the West, which are witness to the influence direct and indirect of the East. The Ottonianum granted

²⁵ Beckwith, "Byzantine Influence on Art", 294, 300.

²⁶ Weitzmann, "Various Aspects of Byzantine Influence on the Latin Countries", 11; Beckwith, "Byzantine Influence on Art", Pl. 10, 295.

²⁷ Weitzmann, "Various Aspects of Byzantine Influence on the Latin Countries", 11; Beckwith, "Byzantine Influence on Art", Pl. 7, 293.

²⁸ A.v. Euw, "Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule. Synthese der künstlerischen Strömungen", in *Kaiserin Theophanu*, 279 and 272, Pl. 16.

²⁹ A.v. Euw, "Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule. Synthese der künstlerischen Strömungen", 273, Pl. 17.

the Pope all the privileges he had in effect already held since the time of Charlemagne. It is a document of 100 centimetres by 40 centimetres executed in gold on a purple background indicating imperial authority. Around the border are rosettes and decorative tendrils.

The Marriage Charter contracted between Otto II and Theophanu is 144.5 centimetres by 39.5 centimetres, and so not too dissimilar in size and shape from the Ottonianum. Some scholars think that this elaborate document would also have had a matching chancellery copy.³⁰ In this document, Theophanu is elevated to the dignity of *consortium imperii*. Afterwards, in formal documents, she is called *consors regni* or *coimperatrix*. Those who were more hostile called her *illa imperatrix greca* ("that Greek empress").³¹ Both the Ottonianum and the Marriage Charter draw on previous decorated Byzantine imperial charters and other imperial charters in the West such as the now lost original Marriage Charter of Otto I and his wife Adelheid.³²

The iconography which informs the Marriage Charter is particularly significant and comprises detailed images of lions and cows, griffins and birds, not unlike some of the images of the symbols of the apostles already discussed, while falcons are depicted on ninth-century embroidery from St. Gall.³³ Similarly, at the bottom of this embroidery now housed at Cologne, are images of lions attacking wild asses. The picture of the hunt of the gyr falcon is Byzantine or Syrian from the eighth or ninth century.

The ivory of the St Gall Monastery is the final image in this sequence informing the Marriage Charter of Theophanu and returning us full circle to the year 800 to an image presumed to be from the Court School of Charlemagne, where we can see the same symbols of animals attacking cloven-hoofed beasts carved within rosettes albeit in ivory rather than on cloth.³⁴

Let us now turn to an ivory carving of the Byzantine emperor Romanos and his wife Eudokia. (Fig. 20) The carving has many similar elements to the ivory of Theophanu and Otto that we saw at the beginning of this paper. It has been debated whether this ivory is that of Romanos II, and consequently dated between 959 and 963, or of Romanos IV, and thus dated between 1068 and 1071. If the former, then it is a precursor to that of Otto II and Theophanu and possibly the model; if it is the latter, then it postdates the Otto/Theophanu ivory. From the history of the use of the term *basilis* by the later Eudokia, the flatter carving of the garments and the plinth and the more refined carving of Christ's face consistent with later Byzantine images, it is more likely to be the latter.³⁵

Finally, let us return to the ivory carving of Otto II and Theophanu (Fig. 12). Schramm has pointed out that the likely donor of the plaque is the figure in the left corner portrayed in the position of *proskynesis* and has identified him as John Philagathos.³⁶ In this ivory, Otto's title is *Imperator Romanorum*, encroaching on the Eastern notion that only the Byzantine emperor was the sole ruler of the Romans. This title was first bestowed by the Italian Chancellery after Otto had besieged Tarentum in 982, ten years after his wedding and the coronation of Theophanu. Consequently, this image is much more likely to have

³⁰ W. Georgi, "Ottonianum und Heiratsurkunde 962/972", in *Kaiserin Theophanu*, 135–139.

³¹ Odilo of Cluny, *S. Adalheidae imperatricis epitaphium* (MGH SS 4), 636–649, VII; Odilo of Cluny, *The Epitaph of Adelheid*, trans. Sean Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and the Epitaph of Adelheid* (Catholic University of America 2004), 7, 134.

³² Georgi, "Ottonianum und Heiratsurkunde 962/972", 146 and Plates 1 and 2.

³³ A. v. Euw, "Ikonologie der Heiratsurkunde", in *Kaiserin Theophanu*, 175 and Pl. 2–3, 177–178.

³⁴ A. v. Euw, "Ikonologie der Heiratsurkunde", Pl. 15, 185.

³⁵ I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory", *DOP* 31 (1977), 318 and Pl. 1.

³⁶ P. E. Schramm, "Kaiser", 214, as cited in Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory", n.55, 316.

been created in or after 982 rather than at Otto and Theophanu's wedding and was probably a confirmation of Otto's extended imperial claims, when, with a Byzantine princess at his side, Otto's right to the title was strengthened.³⁷ This ivory says as much about Theophanu's *imperium* as it does about Otto's. Here she is *imperatrix augusta* but she also took on the titles of *coimperatrix* and *imperator augustus*, the latter being the masculine form of 'emperor' with all its implications of sole and absolute rule.

This paper has touched lightly and briefly on Byzantine influences on the Roman West in two periods both considered 'renaissances' in the medieval West. These developed at the court of Charlemagne in the later eighth century and the court of Theophanu and the Ottos in the tenth century. In both the Carolingian and Ottonian periods in the West, Byzantine influences were combined with others to produce a composite style – recognizable, but with distinct differences. Yet, despite the occasional negative comments about Theophanu being 'Greek' – some sources state she brought "luxury" and "deceit" from the East – nevertheless in the West, struggling to assert its own imperialism, there was an acknowledgement of and lingering admiration for the Eastern Roman legacy.

³⁷ Schramm, "Kaiser", 214, as cited in Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory", n.55, 316.



Figure 12: Ivory carving – Christ with Otto II and Theophanu.



Figure 13: Interior of the Palatine Chapel, Aachen Cathedral.



Figure 14: Lindisfarne Gospels – Luke.

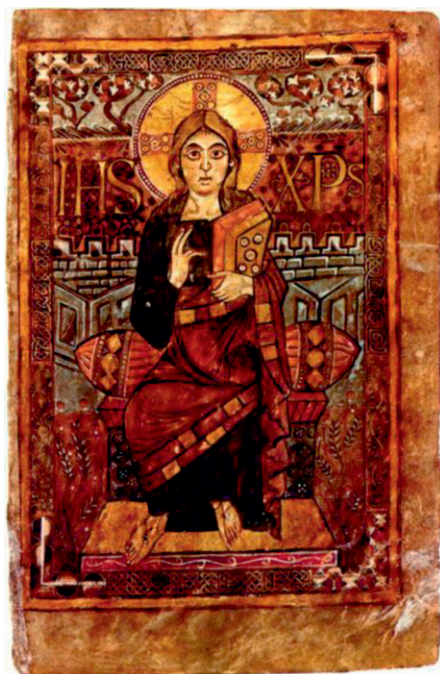


Figure 15: Lindisfarne Gospels – Christ.



Figure 16: Coronation Gospels – John the Evangelist.

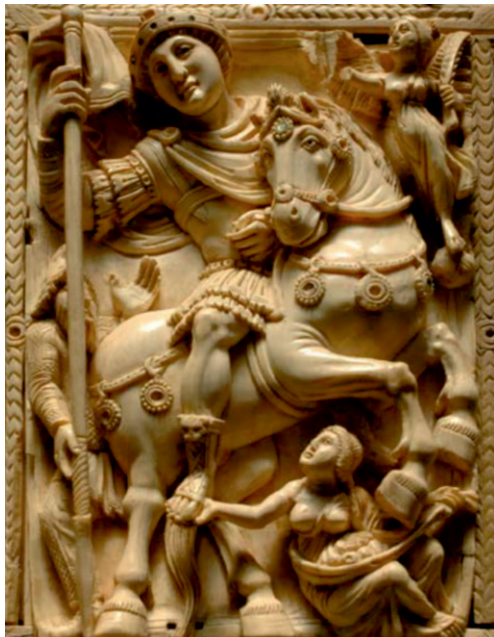


Figure 17: The Barberini Ivory, the Emperor Justinian (?). Leaf of an ivory five-part diptych.



Figure 18: Ivory Archangel, the Archangel Michael. Leaf of an ivory diptych.



Figure 19: Ivory Bookcover, Lorsch Gospels. The Virgin and Child between Zachary and St. John the Baptist.



Figure 20: Eudokia and Romanos.

Andrew Stone

Imperial Types in Byzantine Panegyric

The purpose of this study is to look at the ways in which six different Byzantine emperors were praised in contemporary prose encomia. The six that I have chosen – Basil I, Constantine IX Monomachos, Michael VII Doukas (son of Constantine X Doukas), Alexios I Komnenos, Manuel I Komnenos and Isaac II Angelos – are particularly interesting because they illustrate the way in which different rhetors praised different emperors, and how a virtue was made of individualising topics. It was always customary for rhetors to praise their subjects for the four primary virtues of courage, prudence, temperance and justice, after the manner of mainstream panegyrics. Family, birth or the *genos* and the homeland or *patris* were also often mentioned. This study, however, intends to look at more individualistic topics, or the emphasis of some of these standard topics above others.

Even if for the most part stock *topoi* were used, specific themes, and individual combinations or permutations of them, could be matched to the recipient of the orations or *laudandus*. Then, it is by no means rarely that some encomia praise the *laudandus* for qualities more properly specific to him.¹ I have sought to illustrate the more specific themes or combination of themes, since the orations for five of our six emperors could be regarded as more individualised than most.

Essential for the imperial image above all in the case of any emperor was praise for the virtue of *aristeia* or heroic bravery of some kind, particularly in the battlefield. *Aristeia* was the hallmark of Homeric heroes and warrior kings such as Alexander the Great. Byzantine emperors, even a largely irenic one like Michael VII, were required to be seen to possess this virtue. An emperor could be praised for his victories, or, when he was not personally present on the battlefield, the peace that his armies had achieved.

Let us begin with Basil I. His son Leo VI the Wise composed an *epitaphios* or funeral oration for his father.² Early in the oration Leo diverges slightly from the traditional kind of opening by stating that in the case of someone who has achieved great things, emphasis on his noble ancestry is unnecessary (although he then proceeds to give an account of Basil's forebears).³ Leo does this because of his concern with avoiding the question of the legitimacy of the new "Macedonian" dynasty since Basil was a usurper and a regicide, with Michael III's blood on his hands. Accordingly, a modification of the standard formula was advisable, so that the rhetor could demonstrate both his father's and his own worthiness for empire.

Leo the Wise's oration is a good place to start when considering the nature of *basilikoi logoi*. This is because, much more than the orations for the other five emperors that I have selected, it openly seeks to demonstrate that the author is going to conform to the legitimate template – this it does by outlining what features are appropriate for panegyric.⁴ This will

¹ To be sure, praise for different emperors for multifarious reasons, has been noted, such as by Ruth Webb, "Praise and Persuasion: Argumentation and Audience Response in Epideictic Oratory", in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Aldershot 2003), 134–135.

² Leo VI the Wise, "Oraison funèbre de Basile I^{er}", eds. A. Vogt and S.I. Hausherr (*Orientalia Christiana XXVI-1*) 77, 5–79; henceforth referred to as Leo VI.

³ Leo VI, 42–46.

⁴ See n. 5.

allow us to determine what was standard and what was particular, if we compare the *epitaphios* for Basil I to the encomia for other emperors.

Before launching into his brief account of the appropriate features for imperial rhetoric, Leo also calls upon a *topos* in which the author asserts that his encomium does not employ any fiction⁵ – we may call this the truth *topos*, employed also most notably by Anna Komnene in her *Alexiad* (also particularising) and Michael Psellos.⁶ He follows by describing an accomplishment belonging to his father alone: an irrigation project drawing upon a river unspecified. Not all emperors busied themselves with such projects, so we may regard this as particularising. Individual accomplishments, when they can be found, are as important as, if not more important than, *topoi*, or “clichés” if you like, in encomia of this kind.

After the recognition of the other conventions that should be followed by *basilikoi logoi*, homeland and family are recognised as necessary subjects to be included in such an oration. Once again, this is all to do with the usual legitimization of the dynasty of an emperor.⁷

There is nothing to be gained by paying attention to his family. For even if the rules of encomia send us in search of the subject’s native country and family, such a rule would not be advantageous for the present undertaking; it is clear that it is those who have no way of dignifying themselves through their own achievements who need to collect material from their ancestry.

Leo is seeking here to excuse his imperial father’s lack of a suitably imperial ancestry. Ordinarily, says Menander Rhetor, in his treatise on *basilikoi logoi*, an emperor without a distinguished homeland or family should have these topics passed over.⁸ In this case, however, the orator strikes another note: the superiority of being the establisher of one dynasty over being merely the continuer of another.⁹

Vogt’s comment on the all-important history of Basil’s reign traditionally held to be written by his grandson Constantine VII reminds us that the glorification of the founder of this dynasty continued to be a preoccupation of his successors.¹⁰

Pour l’époque qui nous occupe une oeuvre de grand importance se présente tout d’abord à nous: c’est *la Vie de Basile* que composa son petit-fils, empereur Constantine VII. Écrite entre 945 et 959 par un homme qui fut surtout un souverain de cabinet, car il fut historien, artiste, litterateur et point du tout soldat, elle a pour but de glorifier et perpétuer l’illustre et chère memoire du fondateur de la maison macédonienne.

Next, after speaking briefly of Basil as a transplanter into the imperial garden (that is, the settling of foreigners within the bounds of the Empire),¹¹ Leo comments on his father’s stature.¹²

⁵ Leo VI, 38.22–26.

⁶ See below, n. 48.

⁷ Leo VI, 42.24–44.4.

⁸ Menandros Rhetor, *Basilikos Logos*, edited by D.A. Russell & N.G. Wilson (Oxford 1981), 80 (Greek), 81 (English).

⁹ Leo VI, 44.5–7.

¹⁰ Vogt, *Basile I Empereur de Byzance 867–886 et la civilisation Byzantine à la fin du xie siècle* (New York 1908, repr. 1972), v–vi; for the biography of Basil I by Constantine VII, *Vom Bauernhof auf den Kaiserthron: das Leben des Kaisers Basileios I*, ed. L. Breyer (Graz-Wien-Köln 1981), henceforth called *Life of Basil*.

From his early manhood his great stature proved him outright; not like a man raised through toils and a rough life, but with imperial comfort and relaxation.

Accordingly, Basil's adolescence presaged his nobility and manly vigour.¹³ Furthermore this led to beauty in body and soul.¹⁴ These compliments are part of the general stock of laudatory *topoi* in imperial rhetoric. The more such *topoi*, in the particular instance of *logoi* for Basil, could be included, the better.

The ensuing passage is particularly important, dealing with signs at Basil's birth:¹⁵

Something has almost evaded my memory, something most just to be spoken of and remembered; the Almighty presaged empire for him with many signs from the time of his birth and during his adolescence; but even if these things are not such to deserve not to be mentioned, because the earlier ones yield place to the last and crowning one, I will omit them, and present in this document one, which will be a clear demonstration to all who are present now, and will appear most divinely-inspired to future generations.

These lines are very important – as Menander Rhetor says, plausible fiction may be acceptable in a *basilikos logos*.¹⁶ The heavenly signs are presented as a justification for Basil's accession, even though he was not “born in the purple”.

Leo moves towards a climax – an allusion to the dream of the emperor that foretold his elevation to the position as emperor.¹⁷

And while he was passing through it (the Golden Gate), the sun for its part passed under the earth. Therefore he wished to rest from the labours of wayfaring, to give himself a rest, and bring fame to his sacred temple (it was indeed that of the defender of the truth, Diomedes) just as he was, and he rested on the floor. That same night the martyr appeared, and prophesied empire for him, and enjoined him to take care of his church.

This makes mention of the work done by Basil on the church of St Diomedes, which adds a particularising dimension to the oration.¹⁸ Mention is also made of the reconstruction of a monastery.¹⁹ In Basil's case the most ambitious project was the building of the *Nea*

¹¹ Leo VI, 44.10–11; cf. Eustathios, ed. Wirth, P., *Opera Minora* (CFHB 32, Berlin-New York 2000). This latter oration was delivered in praise of the princess Agnes of France, betrothed to Alexios Porphyrogenetos, the imperial heir. By the dictates of rhetoric the “imperial garden” may be compared to Paradise. Another Eustathian oration talks of the Turks being settled in the Thessalonian plain as able to name their habitation as a New Persia (Eustathios, 248.32–36).

¹² Leo VI, 46.22–24.

¹³ Leo VI, 46.22–48.7. Following this there is a simile of a pot of perfume permeating a house for the imperial deeds and their permeating of the imperial palace.

¹⁴ Leo VI, 48.14–21.

¹⁵ Leo VI, 50.8–13.

¹⁶ Menandros Rhetor, *Basilikos logos*, 371.11–12 (83).

¹⁷ Leo VI, 50.25–29.

¹⁸ *Life of Basil*, 223, 316.

¹⁹ Leo VI, 50.29–52.1–3.

Ekklesia, the great church dedicated to St Michael, Elijah, the Theotokos (Mother of God) and St Nicholas, even if it is not mentioned in this speech.²⁰

Further into the speech there is a *topos* which came to be much to the fore in the Komnenian era – toil on campaign day and night.²¹ Basil is shown to conform to the (generalising) Roman-Byzantine ideal of emperor *cum* soldier.

An interesting observation made by Leo about his father is his humanity.²²

He sought to show them goodness, not thinking evil, and he brought his weapons to bear; ...The enemy had painful experiences: there was no means in effect to resist his efforts: but when the enemy changed he changed just as much the terrible things that they expected into pity...

Later in Leo's oration he speaks of his father's justice²³

What kind of Aiakos or Rhadamanthys thus dispensed justice, whom the Greeks established to be judges in Hades? It seems to me that if this man had lived in their generations the lot that would have fallen to him would have been to give judgement in Heaven not Hades...

This is surely a reference to the legislative programme for which Basil is famed.²⁴ Further, Leo avoids the suggestion of any connection between Basil and the hellenic underworld by imagining that the emperor would, in such circumstances, have been a heavenly judge.

The speech now turns to an interesting event in Byzantine history – the Photian Schism. This involved rival patriarchs – Ignatios (847–858 and 867–877) and Photios (858–867 and 877–886).²⁵ Under Photios the Byzantines broke with Rome. The main reason to allude to the schism was to allow Leo to represent, obliquely, his father as a healer of the rift created between the alternative patriarchs.²⁶ As is obvious, this adds a particularising dimension to the oration.

The orator next casts the emperor's physical formation into a likeness of God.²⁷ Near-divinisation of the emperor is as ancient as the very earliest civilisations, not just Rome. And after that, another *topos* – homage at Constantinople from luminaries of the Empire or even the world,²⁸ doubtless meant to mirror the homage paid to King Solomon – a pet *topos* of many a rhetor, including Eustathios of Thessaloniki²⁹ and Michael Choniates.³⁰

The final pages of the oration serve to sum those characteristics which are intrinsically Basilian.

Interesting in this case is the relatively small emphasis on *aristeia* for a decidedly martial emperor. We will come to consider this in due course – is it the result of the interests of the

²⁰ *Life of Basil*, 271.

²¹ For example, Eustathios, 184.78–84.

²² Leo VI, 58.3–7.

²³ Leo VI, 60.1–5.

²⁴ *Life of Basil*, 126–150.

²⁵ *Life of Basil*, 240, 246, 276, 343.

²⁶ Leo VI, 64.5–10; Ignatios in the years CE 847–858 and 867–877: *Life of Basil*, 245, 246, 276, 343; Photios 858–867 and 877–886: *Life of Basil*, 276.

²⁷ Leo VI, 66.14–19.

²⁸ Leo VI, 66.20–28.

²⁹ Eustathios, 262.54–58.

³⁰ Michael Choniates, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. S. Lampros (Athens 1879–80), 208.4–209.4; see also n. 83.

rhetor, the pacific legislator Leo VI, rather than reflecting the preoccupations of his audience? Perhaps not, since we also see the general run of the legitimising *topoi* in this speech. The overriding theme is that Basil was worthy of the imperial throne wrested so violently by him. However, apart from selecting commonplaces with the intention of showing his predecessor in a good light, Leo makes capital of those acts which were most specific to his father and not carried out by every emperor – his legislation and building of churches. Even where *topoi* were employed, since Leo wished to legitimise his dynasty, a virtue is made of using such *topoi*.

Let us turn now to the speeches of Michael Psellos for Constantine IX Monomachos. We find in Oration 1³¹ some standard themes – the virtue of courage combined with that most hackneyed of commonplaces, the spread of the Byzantine Empire or *oikoumene* from the western pillars of Herakles to those eastern ones of Dionysos. And then again Psellos speaks of numerous embassies – from Egypt, from Ethiopia and from the Pechenegs across the Danube for example. There is nothing very specific to Constantine in any of these.

Constantine's clemency towards a defeated foe (Oration 6), however, is a more specific characteristic³²

At the same time, the wicked barbarian has been taken captive by you, and having been vanquished, nevertheless has received sympathy, and giving up his inhuman ways is treated with humanity.

The barbarian race in question could either have been the Russians in their long ships³³ or, more probably, the Turkic Pechenegs, who had crossed the Danube in Constantine's reign. In the same oration the emperor is praised for prevailing over the Pechenegs, the Cumans and native Byzantine rebels, such as George Maniakes and Leo Tornikios.³⁴ On the other hand the victorious Turks on the eastern frontier were best passed over in silence.

The emperor's clemency is even better spelt out in *Oration* 7.100–103

How – I will dare to repeat the question – did you, you who bring justice to those who are raging against others, not help yourself when attempts were being made to usurp your place?

The passage implies that at least in some cases (precision is not possible) the emperor refrained from imposing the harshest penalties on his opponents.

We may next consider the manner in which Constantine's *aristeia* is described, with an emphasis on his modesty:³⁵

How could one rightly address you? As an emperor? I can indeed see the worthiness of the knowledge that belongs to a ruler, but do I not see where is the pomp associated with this station in life, the snorting against many? As a judge? But do I see the one condemned for his hedonism voted against, as a judge would be able to? As an architect? But the time for buildings overcomes their boundaries.

³¹ Michael Psellos, *Orationes panegyricae*, ed. G.T. Dennis (Stuttgart-Leipzig 1994). Henceforth referred to as *Oration*.

³² *Oration* 6.321–323.

³³ *Chronographia* VI.90–95.

³⁴ *Oration* 5.14–17; *Chronographia* VI.76–85 (Maniakes); VI.99–122 (Tornikios and the Russians).

³⁵ *Oration* 1.231–239.

There is a similar passage in *Oration* 3³⁶

And what is truly more amazing is that a soldier recognised you as a soldier, and the general not only knows how to know this, and the judge calls him a legislator, and an orator a very Demosthenes and a philosopher a very Plato...

Here we see the emperor denoted as the exemplar in different fields of endeavour. Therefore this is an ideal *basilikos logos*. We shall see this also in later speeches, especially those for Manuel I Komnenos and Isaac II Angelos.

The emperor was also required to be physically perfect – in his *Chronographia* Psellos describes the physical beauty of Monomachos,³⁷ an obvious choice of topic for praise. In his encomia Psellos also praises the harmony and proportion of the emperor's limbs and bodily parts,³⁸ saying for example³⁹

And in addition (to his fame he possessed) both an augmentation of good fortune and good tidings at his birth, both power in his physique and the addition of acuity in his mind, if you wish, and the beauty of his body, his fine appearance and good height.

As can be seen this passage is disappointing to the modern reader because it is largely, like many others, a stringing together of *topoi*. However, Psellos must have reasoned, that if one has a ready rhetorical weapon in one's arsenal, it is as well to use it. Psellos also praised Constantine for his strategic disposition of siege engines.⁴⁰ Individually improvised stratagems are praised by orators in relation to other emperors, especially Alexios I Komnenos.

Other primary virtues in Constantine are praised more frequently than that of bravery. Psellos praises the emperor's justice, particularly in the form of clemency, as we have seen – including *philanthropia* in the broader sense of the word.⁴¹ *Oration* 5, which deals with remedial measures against unjust judges, is particularly interesting – and specific. The theme of the emperor's justice is more to the fore here than in case of many another emperor.

There is outright praise for victory in the field in two of the edited encomia (Psellos *Or.* 1 Psellos *Or.* 3). However, on the other hand, the *topos* of the extending of the Empire from the pillars of Herakles to those of Dionysos is given more space than *aristeia* in Psellos' encomia. We can see that even in the passage from *Oration* 3, despite lip service to this virtue – courage – equal space is given to the patronage of rhetoric and philosophy. These latter qualities are not given great emphasis in the case of Leo's *epitaphios* for his father.

But let us turn back to the pacific virtues of Constantine. The predominant characteristics singled out for praise in this emperor are 1) first, and most importantly, justice and mercy and 2) education in the liberal arts – rhetoric and philosophy,⁴² and 3) physique. The

³⁶ *Oration* 3.41–44.

³⁷ *Chronographia* VI.125–126.

³⁸ *Oration* 1.190–197.

³⁹ *Oration* 5.17–20.

⁴⁰ *Oration* 6; Anna Komnena, *Alexiad*, I, IV.vi; cf. n. 51.

⁴¹ *Oration* 1.235ff; 4.326–327; 5.123–127.

⁴² *Chronographia* VI.36–40 speaks of this patronage of the humanities by Constantine.

significance of the first and second would seem to be that the two qualities are espoused by the rhetor as pursuits the emperor himself should follow assiduously.

As we have already seen, Constantine's justice was described in connection with his legislation. This is also the case with Basil I. Such a programme of legislation is an individualising characteristic, since the degree to which the emperor of the day legislated varied.

We find in Psellos *Or.* 1 praise for this ideal, which is more to the fore than other virtues. Let us look at this brief passage⁴³

And you have adorned the act of legislation, because it is an adornment of constitutions, and gives form to a formless material, setting boundaries, like individual periods of time, for affairs.

Associated with Monomachos' legislation is, as Magdalino believes – with reason, as we shall soon see – *sophrosynê*, in the form of the emperor's foundation of two tertiary educational chairs, for philosophy on the one hand and rhetoric on the other (to say nothing of a third for the catechism of converts to Orthodox Christianity). Although these chairs are not specifically mentioned, Psellos *Or.* 3 for example mentions the motivating underlying imperial virtue of wisdom⁴⁴

Thus then, out of the fame of your virtues the greatest and most famed part is your wisdom.

We also see Constantine personally engaging in learned discourse, and therefore displaying the virtue of prudence or intelligence, in another way:⁴⁵

And you, who are proclaimed for your rhetorical skill and revered for your learning should add the fame of your forefathers to your illustrious fatherland.

This participation in philosophy and rhetoric by the emperor himself is highlighted by Psellos in *Oration* 6. All this – philosophy and rhetoric – is particularising, particularly since not only did Constantine patronise them, but Psellos had a vested interest in these pursuits, seeing himself as the resurrector of the humanities.

We have said that Constantine was not strictly speaking a military emperor. This did not prevent Psellos from describing him as a leader of the army even though he had withdrawn the Byzantine *tagmata* (squadrons) from the eastern frontier to stem the passage of the Pechenegs over the Danube at the opposite end of the empire.

Finally, Constantine's piety is noted by Psellos. This, however, is no more than a generalisation which might be applied to any emperor.

Before passing to our fourth emperor, Alexios I, we should first note that in his *Chronographia*, Psellos insists that any praise lavished on Constantine IX, for the very same sorts of reasons as are mentioned in the panegyrics for him, is fully justified, and he professes to be truthful about Constantine's reign.⁴⁶ Psellos and Theophylact of Ochrid, praiser of Alexios, have in common between their encomia praise of justice and that of the

⁴³ *Oration* 1.110–112.

⁴⁴ *Oration* 3.6–9 and 3.41–45.

⁴⁵ *Oration* 5.14–17.

⁴⁶ Michael Psellos, *Chronographia* VI.23.

spread of peace (if the latter is not so apparent to the reader of the *Alexiad*). We may also note that one of the two extant encomia by Michael Psellos for Michael VII Doukas uses praise especially for peacetime qualities – again, rhetoric, wisdom and literacy to note the foremost. Michael VII was the son of Constantine X Doukas, and was educated by Psellos, Constantine X's personal friend. He is said to have followed the literary pursuits engaged in by both his father and his mentor. These therefore take the centre stage in this oration. Psellos also draws attention to himself by referring to those literary affairs pursued in common between himself and Michael.

Psellos draws a contrast between the previous and current regimes, saying⁴⁷

In the past the palace was open only to continuous streams of tribute, and there was great lavishness, and the road to the imperial dwelling was open only for those who brought such contributions. But no attention was paid to words and wordsmiths, who were excluded from access to the palace.

This reflects not only the differences in priorities between the different emperors of the eleventh century (Constantine IX, Michael VI, Isaac I Komnenos, Constantine X Doukas, Romanos Diogenes and Michael VII Doukas) but the notorious squandering of what was in the treasury by Constantine IX.

Psellos talks of Michael's wisdom and encouragement of rhetoric⁴⁸

And now it, the wisdom that has taken corporeal form, or rather has come to dwell in the emperor, and from this worthy place of vantage calls upon its nurslings, and brings on speeches themselves, and those who display their energy in speeches...

This very short oration also draws attention to the emperor's famed ancestry, in particular that of his father, which is said to be beyond the powers of any rhetor to describe.⁴⁹

For who could attain the unattainable, even if had been enriched by the capacity of Homer in words, and Herodotean grace and pleasure and the persuasiveness of Demosthenes and the clarity of Isokrates?

Finally, the wisdom of the emperor is praised. Evidently we have in Michael a pacific ruler, who is praised for many of the same qualities that were possessed by the rhetor, particularly those attributes that he shares with him. Interesting is the praise for generosity, since Michael was responsible for great inflation and received the soubriquet "minus-a-quarter" due to decreased amount of corn the *nomisma* could buy. The most significant elements in the oration, however, are allusions to Michael's father, Constantine X Doukas, and his pursuit of the liberal arts. In other ways, Michael would seem to have been a nonentity.

As for the second speech for Michael VII, it is connected with the temporary exile from court of Psellos. Upon his return Michael VII is praised for his moderation and humility⁵⁰

You alone, most sublime emperor have joined together two matters which are above nature and law, the imperial height and grandeur and a truly modest

⁴⁷ *Oration* 8.10–13.

⁴⁸ *Oration* 8.16–20.

⁴⁹ *Oration* 8.40–43.

⁵⁰ *Oration* 13.23–31.

prudence; rather you have shown both these things to be more dignified in their new mixture, blending power with temperance, as with a drug, and changing it for the better, and elevating your humility of spirit with the imperial chemistry and rendering your personal excellence lofty with the pomp of imperial rule...

This is an occasional oration in which Psellos has selected from the standard imperial virtues those appropriate for a man showing gratitude. However, the theme of humility in the emperor is a little unusual.

The main chronicles of Alexios I's reign, however, differ in their subjects for praise – one cannot but help noticing the saturation of the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena with accounts of the military resourcefulness and swiftly improvised stratagems that marked his campaigns, especially his ambushes.⁵¹ Interestingly, these are remembered as late as the panegyrics of Eustathios of Thessaloniki⁵²

Such a one was Alexios, who in adversity would achieve victory by reformulating his strategy. He was like the lion,⁵³ which does not run away, but lies in ambush and then emerges at a run.

Turning to Theophylact, we see that lip service at least is paid to the four cardinal virtues in Alexios: courage, wisdom, temperance and justice.

This apart, as in Psellos' speeches for Constantine IX, the rhetor extols the peace over the Empire and the conquered barbarians it contains with standard phrases. Indeed, Theophylact claims, the furnace of the emperor's spirit blazes, spreading his fame.⁵⁴ In the ensuing portion of this oration, however, Theophylact deals with methods by which the emperor could recruit some of his erstwhile foes into the Byzantine army.⁵⁵ This was a necessary measure due to the depletion in ranks in the mid- to late eleventh century, but it is cast in the best possible light.

In his summary of the deeds of both theatres of war, Theophylact passes quickly from Persia to the Danube, saying⁵⁶

(Your) deeds, O noble one, those deeds have wrought something frightening upon many of the Huns and have indeed bought the friendship of many cities with your hands, and they have enlisted themselves as allies against the accursed Scythians.

The Huns are the Cumans, the Scythians the Pechenegs, over whom the Cumans prevailed in an alliance with the Byzantines. With the aid of the Cumans, Alexios was able to defeat the Pechenegs at the battle of Levounion (1091). This passage is therefore specific. When it comes to the question of the general nature of the reign, peaceful or warlike, it is blatantly

⁵¹ An example: Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, I.5 (in the war against Nikephoros Bryennios). John Birkenmeier, in his *The Development of the Komnenian Army 1081–1180*, overlooks this important aspect of Alexios' campaigns.

⁵² Eustathios, 241.23–30.

⁵³ As with certain other animals, such as the eagle, the lion is yet again another code-word for "emperor".

⁵⁴ Theophylact of Okhrid, *Opera*, ed. P. Gautier (CFHB 16:1, Thessaloniki 1980), 219.16.

⁵⁵ Cf. the transplantation *topos*, above.

⁵⁶ Theophylact, 219.25–221.2.

obvious that it was a bloody one, fought on all fronts: however, the saturation of Byzantine oratory with praise for peace (which dates back to the *Pax Romana*) ensures that Theophylact's oration would be an even-handed one on the question of predominant war or peace.

One peacetime work of this emperor was Alexios' *orphanotropheion* or orphanage for the raising of orphans. On the other hand, a more typical pastime of the Byzantines, chariot-racing, did not receive patronage from Alexios I, nor did theatre or jesters.⁵⁷ This demonstrates *philanthropia* in the first instance, Anna Dalassene's prudishness, inherited by her son Alexios, in the second. The looks of the emperor, although he was handsome, are passed over.⁵⁸

We must pass on quickly, however, if we are to do justice to the most eulogised emperor of them all – Manuel I Komnenos.

Paul Magdalino demonstrates the importance of the early prose encomia for Manuel I Komnenos – in particular orations by Michael Italikos. He has drawn attention to the way in which Manuel was already being eulogised even when he was not first in line of succession.⁵⁹ This necessitated that court rhetors legitimised his selection over an elder *sebastokrator* and potential heir, Isaac. A quite striking example of such legitimisation is found Michael's oratory. Manuel's *patris* is the imperial city, his *genos* the reigning dynasty. Indeed he was born in the porphyry birth chamber.⁶⁰ The key oration of those surviving, delivered a little while after Manuel's coronation, suggests that Manuel's accession to the throne has reversed the steady decline of the empire since Constantine I.⁶¹

Michael speaks of a falling star seen at Manuel's birth and a vision of the imperial buskins presented to the prince by the Theotokos (Mother of God) when he was twelve.⁶² Manuel is eulogised for his physical beauty⁶³

Hence already the characteristics of your age and your size and your beauty contribute to you on your procession and the harmony of your limbs, and the stoutness of your arms...

In the latter half of the reign, admittedly, *topoi* abound. However, this feature is in itself of interest⁶⁴

...for my migration will not render me so uncouth as to become deprived of linguistic abilities, so as to be unable to depict the beauty of your eyes, the serenity of your countenance, and also the brilliance and heroic quality of your face, the total harmony of the acropolis of your body, which the Most High has turned into a tower of safety for us, as well as the broadness and firmness of your breast, which is like that of a lion, the vigour of your hands, which I think of in terms of those arms of David, which were set upon the brazen bow sent by God.

⁵⁷ Theophylact, 237.6–9.

⁵⁸ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, I.5, III.3.

⁵⁹ P. Magdalino *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos (1143–1180)* (Cambridge 1993), 434, quoting Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner (Vienna 1974).

⁶⁰ Michael Italikos, *Michel Italikos, letters et discours*, ed. P. Gautier (Archives de l'orient Chrétien 14, Paris 1972), 276–294.

⁶¹ Magdalino, *Empire*, 434–435.

⁶² Michael Italikos: see Magdalino, *Empire*, 436.

⁶³ Michael Italikos, 281.21–23.

⁶⁴ Eustathios, 223.11–224.18.

A depiction of this kind followed an account of physical pursuits like hunting and jousting alongside the King of Jerusalem, Amalric I, in and around Constantinople in 1171⁶⁵

He also put to the test his manly bodily strength, showing himself a doughty warrior, so far was possible in a time of great peace, in exercises with horses and such pursuits as lay low wild beasts, those which dwell on the mountains, huge creatures, only a few attacks of which would devastate an inhabited countryside.

We can see how pivotal to Manuel's image in particular were sports and other physical exercises.

A state of peace in 1176 is presupposed by the subjection of the Turks on the western Asian seaboard, which was eventually achieved through the efforts of the Komnenian dynasty:⁶⁶

Most do not even know, except by name alone, the sea, exchanging because of their flight their coastal dwelling for the depths of the mainland, after the most excellent Emperor Alexios had surged over them and swept away the evil; then John made a sea with his victories, the one whom it is right to call most outstanding among the Emperors, and he led himself more strongly out against them, and removed that evil even further. With the third Emperor, the most powerful against them, Manuel, who has girdled the world with the ocean stream of his achievements, bestirred himself more powerfully and pushed them back so that no longer is the sea visible for them.

We may observe here the use of the *topos* of *genos* or ancestry, to legitimise Manuel as the successor of Alexios and John, the opposite phenomenon to specification of no *genos* in the case of Leo VI's *epitaphios* for Basil I.

More specialist praise was called for in two other spheres of endeavour – the emperor's pastoral mission to the see of Thessaloniki, and his delivering of a homily calling for a Byzantine crusade – and in conjunction with this, the quality of his voice in doing so.

A certain Lependrenos was causing problems in Thessaloniki, Eustathios' see, and one John Doukas was sent from Constantinople to remedy the situation. The emperor was praised for this by Eustathios in the following terms⁶⁷

...and the master of all knowledge in the art of healing such things, the emperor, has lately sent forth a good and wise physician with oil and wine and such other things as soothe the hardship stemming from disease, to come among them to heal anyone who has been injured

This is clearly a specific incident of the reign.

Before this had taken place, the emperor had preached the need for a holy war against the infidel.⁶⁸ Eustathios of Thessaloniki not only preached this need, but drew attention to the quality of Manuel's voice⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Eustathios, 214.6–10.

⁶⁶ Eustathios, 204.8–16.

⁶⁷ Eustathios, 196.51–53; A.F. Stone, "Eustathios and Thessaloniki and St Nikephoros of Antioch: Hagiography for a Political End", *Byzantion* 77 (2007), 416–431.

God has imparted yet another thing of most exceptional quality to you, to put it in a word, a further adornment: the clarity of your voice, the sweetness of your enunciation, the roundness of your turn of phrase; and as to that clarity which belonged to the great Homeric orator, I am not able to state definitely even how that speaker possessed clarity, but, as I look at you, I have his case to confirm yours, which perhaps excels it in nature.

On the other hand, the emperor's homily was said by a contemporary rhetor, Euthymios Malakes, to have struck him dumb⁷⁰

Like people who experience and are stricken by the resonance of a great peal of sudden thunder in their hearing, most divine emperor, which is sudden and from this same thing they have become thunderstruck (for they were struck down and shattered, and remained trembling, unable to speak), I myself recently experienced this thing, when I heard the great imperial trumpet...

Similarly, Eustathios, later in his 1176 Epiphany oration, says⁷¹

Indeed, to hear Manuel's voice is like hearing a gentle thunder, and those who grasp what he is saying would think that an angel is talking.

The same homily produced two similar reactions since the same image was used,⁷² so that they are in effect convergent. Then another topical theme, was also used by Euthymios⁷³

We muttered to each other, "God is speaking to us! Now the Lord has thundered from heaven to us mightily, the voice of the Lord in its magnificence!"

Then, as another way of praising the emperor's voice, there is a *synkrisis* between Manuel and Orpheus⁷⁴

for if the penetration of your voice and the great honey-like pleasure dripped into me and somehow seemed to leap and bound because of the size of the joy, no less than as if it had been Orpheus' lyre, ...

Even further, Eustathios and Euthymios similarly use yet another image; first Euthymios⁷⁵

O depth of wisdom of the emperor! O the size of his knowledge, which I have been unable to trace out or learn!

⁶⁸ Cf. Magdalino, *Empire*, 96; Euthymios Malakes ("Εὐθυμίου τοῦ Μαλάκη μητροπολίτου Νέων Πατρῶν: Δύο Εγκωμιαστικοὶ Λόγοι", ed. K.G. Bones, *Θεολογία* 19 (1948), *Oration* II, 551–558; Stone, "Dorylaion Revisited: Manuel I Komnenos and the refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion", *Byzantion* 61 (2003), 183–199.

⁶⁹ Eustathios, 226.8–227.13.

⁷⁰ Malakes, *Oration* II, 551.1–5.

⁷¹ Eustathios, 227.33.

⁷² Malakes, 551.4–7: the speaker is thunderstruck.

⁷³ Malakes, 551.21–24.

⁷⁴ Malakes, 551.26–28.

⁷⁵ Malakes, 552.10–11.

And Eustathios

Oh, the sweetness of conversation; oh, what wealth of argument; oh, what a depth of meaning creating mystery because of the profoundness of your knowledge; oh, what a light of utterances illuminating the depth of your meanings with the sunshine of your expression.

Before we pass to our final emperor, we should be aware that Manuel was not only an endurer of great toil but a student of the scriptures, theology and a keen partisan in Church debates. We find an allusion to this in an oration of Eustathios, probably of Lent 1180⁷⁶

Or who would not marvel at the hands which are now occupied with weapons, now by pages of books, assigning their fingers at one time to wars, and those of a kind that one would not endure easily, but now they are assigned to writings, and these writings are not those which one chances upon, but divinely-wrought ones.

One should compare to this an excerpt of Euthymios' "homily" speech for Manuel (1176):⁷⁷

He is blessed with words and books throughout almost all the night. From where then is there so great a wealth of knowledge? From where is such greatness in wisdom? He is said to be wise among emperors and has received this appellation as his due.

But this "homily oration" also has one extremely concentrated passage depicting Manuel's virtues⁷⁸

This name of emperor, this powerful thing itself, a noble hoplite, enemy of Antimachos, destroyer of cities, killer of Persians, stormer of walls, besieger, builder of cities, ruler of the nations, saviour and preserver and champion or rhetor, writer of speeches, philosopher, teacher, good counsellor, aimer of genius, capable judge; by which of the two cures, coming from a common surgery, should one be bound, so that you are not a servant of Ares alone, but one who sits by and shares the hearth of Hermes?

Professor Magdalino and others have wondered whether Isaac II Angelos, the first emperor of the succeeding dynasty, intended to emulate the reign of Manuel I, as a "Renaissance Man".⁷⁹ I would like to draw attention to two parallel passages in another two orations of Eustathios, one on the campaign of Manuel against the Seljuks, one on the campaign of Isaac II against the Cumans. I have so far passed over the *topos* of toil on behalf of the emperor's subjects, equally valid in the case of Alexios I and Manuel I.

⁷⁶ Eustathios, 186.46–49.

⁷⁷ Malakes, 552.23–26.

⁷⁸ Malakes, 555.18–24.

⁷⁹ On the Komnenian "Renaissance", see Magdalino, *Empire*, 382–432.

However, conditions in the expedition against the Turks at Claudiopolis under Manuel were particularly demanding⁸⁰

Many horses, one after another, were goaded by the emperor to gallop into battle, and not only all day long, but they were also spurred against the same men even at night, these untiring feet conquering both soldiers and nature, such as are not found among ordinary men without weariness taking hold of them; if sleep is absent, not only that which is deep enough to relax the limbs and is sweet to mention, but even a brief closing of the eyelids, how would this make the traveller abroad healthy?

The conditions under the expedition against the Cuman uprising under Isaac II Angelos were even more arduous⁸¹

For the Scythian brigand has leaped over the river from the other side, and has planned to do terrible things, watching for a similar opportunity to the one in the recent past, which was in a night with a great rain all night long, and an obscured moon, and altogether in other ways a worse occasion than even that. For rain tore down all night, and one would not say of the accompanying circumstances that it was not more bitter than snow; and wind, whipping it into a fury, drove it on against our faces, so as also to dull one's eyesight, so that no one could see where they had to walk.

Eustathios says that Isaac was not only a relentless toiler, according to the dictates of rhetoric, but, like Manuel, a keeper of vigils of great piety:⁸²

And you are here able to sing psalms, not because you keep vigil at midnight to attend to God's ordinances, but because since they are so many you have instead toiled in them all night long

Here again Isaac wished to be judged as an equal of Manuel, by allowing himself to be praised as a man as pious as his predecessor. Similarities are present since the incumbent emperor sought to emulate the scions of the great Komnenos dynasty.

Here is one last excerpt, in this instance from Michael Choniates⁸³

We were not about to come here from Athens triply pleased with greater awe than that for the wisdom of Solomon, alongside which not only Solomonian wisdom drew our emperor causing wonder, but justice and Davidic manliness...

It need hardly need saying that comparisons or *synkriseis* between the reigning emperor and Solomon and David are also commonplaces.

⁸⁰ Eustathios, 184.78–84.

⁸¹ Eustathios, *Opuscula*, ed. T.L.F. Tafel (Frankfurt-am-Main 1832, repr. 1964), 42.59–68.

⁸² Eustathios, *Opuscula*, 43.53–57.

⁸³ Choniates, 208.4–209.4.

What conclusions can we reach? There has been a tendency to dismiss Byzantine rhetoric as concatenations of commonplaces with its use of *topoi*, and largely following outlines dating back as far as the Second Sophistic, especially Menandros Rhetor, together with others, like Libanios. A capstone of such rhetoric is praise of the key virtues of courage, justice, temperance and prudence in its imperial recipients. *Genos* and *patris* are also important. The assumption has been that all recipients are praised for much the same things without much leeway for individualising characteristics. This to some extent cannot be denied.

But the truth *topos* should not be dismissed as mere rhetoric; even if the bulk of such oratory employs standard *topoi*, the rhetors often made a greater virtue of the individual characteristics of their subjects. In addition, the use of the general range of *topoi* could sanction the reign of the incumbent, particularly where legitimisation was important, as in the cases of Basil I and Manuel I. But on the other hand, rhetors also sought to differentiate their subject from other emperors, and the topics that they used to do this are a seasoning for their orations. This is one aspect of the truth *topos*, and it is something which deserves to be recognised.

Basil was the victorious claimant to the throne legitimised, as the orations show, by the demonstration of suitably imperial qualities, such as victory in the field and dispensation of justice whether as judge or legislator, and, then again, as builder of churches.

Constantine Monomachos was praised for beauty, justice and wisdom, the latter displayed by patronage of philosophy and rhetoric, as well as his legislation. But Psellos also sees fit to draw attention to Constantine's *aristeia* and the drowning of the Pechenegs in what can only be the Danube. Constantine's clemency, even where treason was involved, is particularly interesting. Following Basil and Manuel, praise for him is felt to be the most comprehensive.

Michael VII is praised for his learning and generosity, as well as his humility and clemency. Psellos, in addition, emphasises his imperial power, although this is perhaps less appropriate, given the weakness of his subject.

Alexios I Komnenos was praised for his martial virtues, his courage and mastery of tactics on the battle field, and piety in addition, which expressed itself in his eschewing of the Hippodrome.

Manuel I Komnenos was the complete renaissance man, warrior, endurer of the rigours of campaign, beautiful, receiver of embassies like Solomon, theologian, pious like David, rhetorician and other things besides.

Isaac II was a pale emulator of Manuel, although Michael Choniates makes more of the emperor's wisdom than Eustathios does.

The selection of emperors and rhetors show us two things. First, when the same emperor is praised by different rhetors, their speeches seek to show an original permutation within the compass of approved *topoi*. Take the example of Eustathios and Euthymios Malakes on the homily of Manuel I – with both similarities and differences in their speeches. On the other hand when the same rhetor praises different emperors there is greater individuation between them – witness Michael Psellos in speeches for Constantine IX Monomachos versus his oration for Michael VII. Psellos clearly likes to cast these two recipients of his orations as men after his own heart, men of letters, especially Michael VII, Psellos' pupil. We have therefore, given the use of both *topoi* and individualising subjects, a possible whole permutation of the two. This results in increased variation, among different rhetors and the emperors they praise.

One might consider the range of *topoi* and specifying topics at the rhetoricians' disposal to be a palette of colours of different hues, be it pastel, sombre or vivid. These colours vary between emperors. There may be different degrees of contrast, in the selection of colours,

with the rhetor showing judicious selection of his tints, and these orators sought, within the confines of sanctioned images, either individualising or generalising, to make each oration as great a permutation as these images allowed. Part of the process was to ensure that the emperor's image was appropriate for the individual. The inclusion of particularising topics prevents Byzantine oratory from consisting of stereotyping without relief.

Penelope Buckley

Alexios Komnenos as the Last Constantine

The art of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* is many-sided. This paper will consider only one: the art with which a pattern that has been partly subterranean comes into view. Once the Treaty of Devol is signed in Book Thirteen, Komnene ends a long struggle, symbolically containing the Normans, and reveals the long-projected discovery that Alexios is a second Constantine. The discovery is controlled in such a way as to reveal that indeed he is also the Last.

Paul Magdalino places the revival of Constantine the Great's name and reputation between the seventh and tenth centuries. "It was in the middle of this period that Constantine fully came into his own as a figure of hagiography."¹ By the tenth century, when sons were being named, "[t]he tension between reference to imperial tradition and reference to ancestral tradition was finally resolved in favour of the latter".² But Constantine had by no means lost *éclat*: in the same era "we find Constantine Porphyrogenitus inventing pronouncements of Constantine the Great".³ While Magdalino sees the fever as having passed by the eleventh century, he notes signs that Constantine VIII, the last emperor buried in the first Constantine's mausoleum, may have been "trying to be a new Constantine".⁴ Then, as Margaret Mullett says, Komnene revived the practice in a "careful presentation of Alexios as New Constantine".⁵

Though she does not name him as such until Book Fourteen, she has been preparing the comparison since the opening of Book One. It is tacitly mediated by resemblances to other emperors (especially the Basils) who seem intended to be recognized though they are not named, and quietly constructed through narrative motifs that might as well have come direct from Eusebios, however they did in fact reach her and through what tributary legends. It seems fanciful to imagine that she had access to Eusebios' *Vita*, despite Cameron's and Stuart's encouraging remarks that "Photius' entry shows a renewed awareness of the *VC* in Constantinople with the revival of learning and the ending of Iconoclasm", and that "the oldest and best" surviving manuscript is tenth-century and the next two best are from the twelfth.⁶ In any case, she did not need it. The Constantinian legend had many forms of transmission: the exemplar had itself become a palimpsest. It is beyond my scope to try to trace Komnene's particular means of access to cultural memories of Constantine but the legend as told by Eusebios is so durable within it that a range of similarities appears in a direct comparison between the *Alexiad* and the *Vita*. I shall use the *Vita*, and Skylitzes following *Theophanes Continuatus*,⁷ as representative versions of Komnene's cultural capital, without implying that she had read either – although it appears more likely than it once did that she read Skylitzes.

¹ "It was in the middle of this period that Constantine fully came into his own as a figure of hagiography": *New Constantines*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Hampshire 1994), 3.

² Magdalino, *New Constantines*, 6.

³ Magdalino, *New Constantines*, 3.

⁴ Magdalino, *New Constantines*, 6.

⁵ M. Mullett, "Alexios I Komnenos and Imperial Renewal", in *New Constantines*, 259–267, 267.

⁶ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford 1999), 50–51.

⁷ Together with the two texts she worked directly from, the *Hyle* and the *Chronographia*.

It is no surprise that Alexios is named a Constantine. It would have been surprising had he not, but the way in which it is done illuminates the trajectory of Komnene's history and her art. Looking back, one sees how the patterned likeness becomes fully visible once she has guided the conclusion into view. And here, as elsewhere, her strategies respond to three factors she sees as critical to his reign and her account of it: the loss at Manzikert, the view of emperors expressed by her literary mentor Psellos, and the huge impression made on Byzantine thinking by the Norman wars. From the beginning, Alexios' task was one of restoration. His historian's parallel task is to reclaim for him the idea of empire embodied in the myth of Constantine, confound Western pretensions and give Alexios' empire its apotheosis. Although Psellos did not discredit the Constantinian legend, he placed it firmly out of reach: "an emperor...especially if he lived longer than most, would never be able to maintain the highest standards all through his reign."⁸ As Komnene constructs her father as a second Constantine, she is equally pursuing her project of contradicting this main tenet of the *Chronographia*.

The idea of Constantine was antithetically inscribed in the city itself: a New/Old Rome of western design in the east. Constantine himself famously had strengths that counterbalanced each other: he renewed the Roman tradition through his innovations, he was warlike but merciful, pious yet rational; these antithetical virtues made him easy for imperial propagandists to evoke, in that if an emperor were not warlike he could plausibly be described as merciful, and vice versa. Psellos subverted this pattern to describe the difficulties and failings of an emperor:

"If he gives rein to kindly sentiments, he is accused of ignorance, and when he rouses himself to show interest, they blame him for being meddlesome."⁹

Komnene picks up the antithetical form and restores it to its traditional function, turning from one of Alexios' virtues to its counter-virtue in the manner of a philosopher: "and if someone were to say, I should reply...". She duplicates her father's anxious conscientiousness by building the Psellosian pattern of emperor-critique into the pattern of her defence. Like the great exemplar's, and her father's, her restorations are innovations and her innovations restorations.

Psellos had raised the standard of imperial history-writing. Among much else, she takes from him a strong sense of the liveliness of human personality, with its mix of motives and behaviours, and a keen feeling for the scepticism of the intelligent reader. She reasons critically through her material as she offers it. She anchors the extreme in factual contexts. In her last book, she likens Alexios to a small implement of war: "in flight he would triumph, in pursuit conquer, falling he stood and dropping down he stood upright, like a caltrop (for however you throw it, it will always point upwards)."¹⁰

The caltrop is a humble and defensive *μηχανή* – physics-based, with an element of trick or game. Alexios had used it against Robert Guiscard. Its innate uprightness yet ingenuity make it an ingenious emblem for her emperor, as its resilience does for her own style: her

⁸ Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 6.27, ed. and trans. Émile Renauld, Michel Psellos, *Chronographie* (Paris 1926–1928), 1.131; trans. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* (London 1966), 169.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 15.3.3, edited by Dieter R. Reinsch and Athanasios Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* (CFHB vols. XL/I, Berlin and New York 2001), 468; trans. E.R.A. Sewter, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* (London 1969), 478.

staple narrative may be likened to the same small implement in that it can respond to extremes without being overset. Alexios may function as *Pantokrator* or whirlwind, strategist, stage-manager or pillar of fire, but he still comes out as Alexios in a prose whose sturdy realism and self-modifications ground him in the observable world. Whereas the writer of *Theophanes Continuatus* tacks on many of the Constantinian traits to his fierce Basil, Komnene does not talk the likeness up or lay it on, but kneads it in. She works a Constantinian likeness that goes far beyond coincidence or panegyric convention so that, when she does declare it, it comes as something long known though not said. The ideal is embedded in a complex yet stable personality, acting through events. It is this that so distinguishes his idealization as a Second Constantine.

Meanwhile, the impact of the Norman invasions was very great: it attacked Byzantium's self-belief. As Komnene works to fortify Byzantium's idea of itself as *the* Christian empire, her *donnée* is that no other emperor had it so hard.

Of all the emperors who preceded him, right down to the present day, not one had to grapple with affairs so complicated...in my father's reign great disorders and wave on wave of confusion united...The Romans...are naturally hated by their subjects. ...[But i]n the old days...there was a great buoyancy about the Empire...the burden of government was not so heavy...[I]n my father's reign...a veritable flood of dangers poured in on him from everywhere...¹¹

That view runs like an undercurrent through the history and surfaces in this late passage. Alexios has contained the Normans, but he is the last real emperor and the empire cannot survive him. It is just here that she declares he is more like Constantine than Constantine.

A large part of her art – the care that Margaret Mullett speaks of – is the controlled release of information. If we backtrack through the history we find that Alexios' life is not just likened to Constantine's, tacitly and through other emperors, but that it moves by stages towards the aspect of Constantine she most wishes to show in him. When she brings the Constantinian likeness forward, she makes it illuminate a picture of finality. The point she chooses for comparison – the thirteenth apostle – is, after all, the character Constantine himself assumed only in his funeral monument. As the first half of the history arrived at a warrior who was the equal of the Basils, so the second culminates in a Constantine who can never be surpassed or matched.

From the beginning the resemblances are there. Constantine's growth in self-control and in rhetorical skills¹² came out of the republican tradition and was a particularly necessary qualification for any emperor who "seized the throne";¹³ Komnene follows the *Hyle* in emphasizing these qualities at the start of Book One, as Alexios curbs his youthful impatience and then rides out a threatening military situation with self-mastering public

¹¹ *Alexiad* 14.7.1–2 (trans. Sewter 458), 449–450.

¹² Eusebios, *De vita Constantini* 1.19.2, ed. F. Winkelmann (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1975), 26 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 77). Basil is credited with these, *Theophanes Continuatus* (Basil I), 72 ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1838), 314; trans. C. Stallman (unpublished) 108–109, and they are reattributed to him at the testing time after his eldest son's death: *Theophanes Continuatus* (Basil I), 98 (trans. Stallman 150), 345–346.

¹³ *Alexiad* 1.1.1 (trans. Sewter 31), 11.

rhetoric.¹⁴ Brilliant generalship, wakefulness on behalf of the Empire, generosity and clemency are all qualities that Byzantine historians starting with Eusebios bestowed on Constantine, Justinian,¹⁵ Basil I¹⁶ and other great or eulogized emperors; so too with piety and justice. These qualities are seeded through the *Alexiad*, with the implication that Alexios fulfils them to a degree never seen before. For even in the early stages, while Komnene is responding to historiographical tradition, she is enlarging the picture and preparing to make it more theocratic than anything in the *Hyle* or the *Chronographia*. Eusebios' Constantine – the first pious Byzantine emperor – cherished “ministers of God”,¹⁷ making them table companions and taking them on campaign. Komnene underlines these practices from Book One.¹⁸ When she retells the *Hyle* story of Roussel she increases Alexios' resemblance to Christ. In the Basilakes episode she highlights not only his piety but his potential as a conduit to the numinous.

Book Three shows him re-establishing the Christian State: as Constantine did first, Alexios does anew, giving each stage of his imperial confirmation a theocratic dimension. When Alexios appoints his mother co-emperor he solves Psellos' dilemma in a stroke – how one man may be at once a domestic icon/administrator in the City and a “soldier-emperor” in the field. But his solution goes beyond the difficulty as Psellos saw it.¹⁹ Alexios seeks to unify the empire through a family administration and to make that administration theocratic, thus restoring old practices and integrating established institutions with an innovatory sweep. Constantine is, of course, the great innovator of Byzantium itself: the silent guarantor behind Komnene's claims for Alexios and his mother.²⁰ The resolution of conflict between the Doukases and Anna Dalassene is more than a division of power: it allows Dalassene to interfuse the domestic administration with the ecclesial. Komnene herself sacralises the political narrative by re-investing the imperial family with *basileia* and extending its radiance to the new honours and distinctions. She claims particular genius for Alexios in his invention of these²¹ but Constantine had been before him – “in order to promote more persons the Emperor contrived different distinctions”.²² Finally, the rite of penance re-empowers the Church in the new State and re-invests that State in the imperial family as it unites in lamentation in the palace. Alexios

¹⁴ There is not space here to demonstrate how she develops these qualities from the *Hyle* models: see *Alexiad* 1.1.1 (trans. Sewter 31), 11 and 1.2.4–7 (trans. Sewter 34–5), 14–15.

¹⁵ Procopius uses these inversely in the *Secret History* where Justinian's brilliant proxy-general is mistreated, his unsleeping energy is demonized and he plays good cop/bad cop with Theodora in a process of entrapment, but the formula is clearly seen in its inversion.

¹⁶ *Theophanes Continuatus* (Basil I), 72 (trans. Stallman 109–110), 315–316.

¹⁷ *De vita Constantini* 1.42.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 86), 37; cf. *Theophanes Continuatus* (Basil I), 72 (trans. Stallman 108–109), 314–315.

¹⁸ *Alexiad* 1.8.2 (trans. Sewter 49), 30; see also *Alexiad* 3.8.3 (trans. Sewter 121), 105.

¹⁹ Psellos dramatized two major rebellions: one in favour of the domestic icon Zoe and one in favour of the soldier-emperor-to-be, Isaak Komnenos. Each proved inadequate to the double task, and in several emperors Psellos diagnoses a split in personality or practice that corresponds to the tension between ruling from the city and guarding the borders.

²⁰ Innovation in the sense of something timely: “She was...always evolving new ideas (καινοτέρας...τὰς γνώμας)”. *Alexiad* 3.8.4 (trans. Sewter 121), 106. “It had been a reign of surprising boldness and novelty.” (καινοπραγία) *Alexiad* 15.10.5 (trans. Sewter 504), 493.

²¹ Alexios' inventions go beyond the family ambition of a Basil I or a Romanos: they are designed to let him keep his word to the former empress and his brother-in-law while giving precedence to himself and his own brother, by a system that displays both *nous* and virtue.

²² *De vita Constantini* 4.1.2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 154), 120.

is especially sacralized – “his head supported on ... a stone”²³ in an image that looks forward to his last end – while the penance moves the characterization of his co-emperor Anna Dalassene onto another level.

For any imperial historian wishing to draw a parallel with Constantine, Dalassene was a stroke of luck. Many mothers (pre-eminently Basil’s) are entrusted with important dreams but few Second Constantines can boast a Helena on Anna Dalassene’s scale. Komnene made extraordinary use of her, transforming her from the stagey virago of the *Hyle* into a *Theotokos* for the city and a figure transcending gender who could give Alexios the double guidance that Constantine had from his two parents.²⁴ Her “intellectual powers” are praised in uncompromising terms – “he was convinced that she...excelled all men of that generation in...understanding of affairs”.²⁵ When she reforms the women’s quarters in the palace, she gives the lie to the complaint that Alexios had transferred the government to the *gynaikonitis*,²⁶ for both are transformed together as “the palace assumed the appearance rather of a monastery”.²⁷ a precedent set long ago not by Helena but by Constantine’s father Constantius under whom “the body of persons assembled within the imperial quarters was in all respects a church of God”.²⁸

Komnene never names the mythical mother-figures behind Dalassene: unlike Pulcheria, she is never called a Second Helena, yet the resemblance to Eusebios’ character is marked. Eusebios’ Helena “came, though old...to apply her outstanding intellect...and to inspect with imperial concern the eastern provinces”,²⁹ “her son providing her with the right arm of imperial authority”;³⁰ “he even remitted to her authority over imperial treasuries”. Anna Dalassene is now seen as ageing, too: “she had in mind the last stage of life and dreamed of monasteries”,³¹ yet Alexios entrusts her with the “entire administration...the choice of civil magistrates, the accounts of the imperial revenues...”.³² His chrysobull gives her power even beyond his own. Other aspects of Helena’s example are common currency,³³ but the power given to Dalassene remains exceptional and the precedent is there.

Other emperors who figure in Alexios’ construction mediate the Constantinian legend in specific ways.³⁴ A precedent for the rite of penance was set by John Tzimiskes,³⁵ an

²³ *Alexiad* 3.5.5 (trans. Sewter 115), 100.

²⁴ “Not only was she a very great credit to her own sex, but to men as well”: *Alexiad* 3.8.2 (trans. Sewter 120), 105.

²⁵ *Alexiad* 3.7.5 (trans. Sewter 120), 105.

²⁶ *Alexiad* 3.7.2 (trans. Sewter 119), 103.

²⁷ “She instituted set times for the singing of sacred hymns, stated hours for breakfast...a special period in which magistrates were chosen...Priests and monks...shared her meals...the greater part of the night was spent by her in...chanting...and...prayers...Nevertheless, at dawn...she was applying herself anew to state business...”: *Alexiad* 3.8.2–4 (trans. Sewter 121), 105–106.

²⁸ *De vita Constantini* 1.17.3 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 76), 24.

²⁹ *De vita Constantini* 3.42.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 137), 101.

³⁰ *De vita Constantini* 3.43.4 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 138), 102.

³¹ *Alexiad* 3.6.2 (trans. Sewter 116), 100.

³² *Alexiad* 3.7.1 (trans. Sewter 119), 103.

³³ Like Alexios himself, Dalassene and the younger empress Irene feed the poor and needy: *De vita Constantini* 3.44 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 138), 102; *Alexiad* 15.7.5, 3.8.3, 12.3.9 (trans. Sewter 493, 121, 377), 483, 105, 367; Irene takes on the “dignified and modest attire” for which Helena is praised: *De vita Constantini* 3.45 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 138), 103; *Alexiad* 12.3.2–3 (trans. Sewter 375), 364–365.

³⁴ Theodosios obtains victory through his piety, John Tzimiskes shows a sensitive conscience and consideration for his armies, and Isaak Komnenos is an ancestor of sorts. The two Basils present a special and ambivalent case.

emperor with conscience later used by Komnene to offset the harshness of Basil I. In the next three books, as Alexios struggles to get the better of the invading Normans, the strategy of building up his character as a pious emperor continues; but when he does start to prevail over the battle-hardened Robert Guiscard, with the reinforcement of prayer, dreams, visions and vigils,³⁶ the obvious model is Theodosios I. Komnene also uses Basil I and II and Isaak Komnenos to establish warrior-aspects of Alexios. None is named³⁷ and while these references are obvious there is in all these attributes a steady resemblance to Constantine himself being simultaneously constructed, though without display.

Both Constantine and Alexios write letters assiduously:³⁸ Komnene adopts the Eusebian practice of including full texts, adapting this to incorporate other formal documents. Both give public addresses (Constantine inclining more towards the sermon). Both habitually withdraw into a private space to pray: Constantine “would shut himself at fixed times each day in secret places...and would converse with his God alone” in imitation of his Saviour,³⁹ and Alexios is doing just that during the parade of Michael Anemas.⁴⁰ Both study the Scriptures ardently⁴¹ and intervene in Church affairs. Constantine “would...apply his mind to the meaning of the divinely inspired oracles”⁴² before offering prayers before his household. Komnene speaks of her parents “labouring...night and day in searching the Holy Scriptures”⁴³ and says that “no man...more zealously searched the Holy Scriptures than [Alexius], in order to have a ready answer in his debates with the heretics”.⁴⁴ Constantine “brought under his control one Roman Empire united as of old, the first to proclaim to all the monarchy of God, and by monarchy himself directing the whole of life under Roman rule.”⁴⁵ Alexios confirms that monarchy, if somewhat ambivalently, in Book Six, when he establishes his sway over a unified Church-State in the matter of the appropriations; but even then, in the thick of battle, “he had the greatest faith in God, making Him the centre of his own life”.⁴⁶ It is this sixth book that first names him as an apostle: “a high priest, as it were...with an apostle’s faith and message, eager to convert to Christ...all the barbarians...”⁴⁷ The full reach of these similarities is reserved, however, for the final books.

³⁵ Skylitzes *John Tzimiskēs 2, Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum* ed. I. Thurn CFHB 5, Series Berolinensis (Berlin 1973) 285; John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Histories (811–1057 AD): A Provisional Translation* (Manitoba 2000), trans. J. Wortley, 154. John Tzimiskēs’ penance was a much lesser one, however, and he handled the situation with the former empress much less well. His weakness was his lack of family.

³⁶ *Alexiad* 5.5.6–8 (trans. Sewter 169–70), 155–7, his reward being the dust-storm in Book Five:

Alexiad 5.6.3 (trans. Sewter 171), 158.

³⁷ Where she does name John Tzimiskēs and Basil II in another context, it is just to say that they alone before Alexios, in recent memory, dared to set foot in Asia: *Alexiad* 15.10.5 (trans. Sewter 505), 493.

³⁸ *De vita Constantini* 2.23.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 104), 57–58; *Alexiad* 1.16.5, 4.4.1, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 13.4.5, 13.8.7 (trans. Sewter 71, 140, 160, 161, 406, 417), 52, 126, 146, 147, 395, 407.

³⁹ *De vita Constantini* 4.22.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 160), 128.

⁴⁰ *Alexiad* 12.6.7 (trans. Sewter 385), 375.

⁴¹ *De vita Constantini* 4.17 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 159), 126; *Alexiad* 14.7.9 (trans. Sewter 462), 453.

⁴² *De vita Constantini* 4.17 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 159), 126.

⁴³ *Alexiad* 5.9.3 (trans. Sewter 178), 165.

⁴⁴ *Alexiad* 14.8.8 (trans. Sewter 466), 457.

⁴⁵ *De vita Constantini* 2.19.2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 102), 56.

⁴⁶ *Alexiad* 5.4.8 (trans. Sewter 165), 152.

⁴⁷ *Alexiad* 6.13.4 (trans. Sewter 211–212), 199.

A great intermediary figure had to be dealt with first. The character of Constantine the great warrior had long been pre-empted by Basil I and Basil stood in Alexios' light. The Life of Basil I, transmitted within the imperial-hagiographic genre invented by Eusebios, had already provided the blueprint for the *Alexiad*. It was *the* pattern of greatness. In his war against the Scyths, Alexios even briefly incarnated Basil (or became a composite version of both Basils). But while Basil I is given great prominence in the history, distinctions are made that clear the way for a direct link between Constantine and Alexios that does not pass through Basil. Not only does she not name Basil, but when she borrows from his massacre she ignores his Constantinian pretensions, omitting their echo, a "great paean of shouting broke out with cries of 'the Cross has conquered!'"⁴⁸ Perhaps, in any case, she disliked the associations the cry acquired in the First Crusade but, more obviously, it would blur the difference between the twin peaks of the history. The significance of Book Eight is that Alexios fulfils the Basil warrior-legend and turns away from its brutality towards the more ethical ideal that had always otherwise characterized him. He is seen as equalling the greatest soldier-emperors but, in the light of his trajectory, they are revealed as falling short of the full Constantinian ideal. The Constantine highlighted for Alexios is the emperor for whom the end of war is peace.

It is to be a Christian *pax romana*. Eusebios says Constantine "was outstanding in all virtues, but especially for kindness"⁴⁹ and describes him as winning "his usual bloodless victories".⁵⁰ At times he even tells his men "not to pursue hard, so that the fugitive might reach safety...and come...to a better frame of mind."⁵¹ Eusebios had his own reasons for writing up Constantine's clemency⁵² but the picture is consistent:

"...in conducting military operations...he was anxious to avoid great slaughter. He was therefore as careful to preserve the enemy's men as his own. So he...urged his men...to spare their prisoners, and as men themselves not to forget their common humanity."⁵³

That was the very spirit moving Alexios when he had his change of heart: "Scyths they may be...but human beings all the same; enemies, but worthy of pity."⁵⁴ Throughout the *Alexiad*, he forgives his enemies and those who rebel against him, even "load[ing] with countless gifts" those who have betrayed or tried to kill him.⁵⁵ This theme of magnanimity does appear in the *Theophanes Continuatus* Life of Basil⁵⁶ – it is a necessary Constantinian legacy – but there it seems willed, part of a systematic sanitizing of Basil's rise to power, whereas clemency and kindness are the features of Alexios that Komnene dwells on most.

⁴⁸ Skylitzes *Synopsis*, (Basil I), 19 (trans. Wortley 78), 139.

⁴⁹ *De vita Constantini* 4.54.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 174), 142.

⁵⁰ *De vita Constantini* 4.53 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 174), 142.

⁵¹ *De vita Constantini* 2.11.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 99), 53.

⁵² He is blamed for "a relaxation of censure" within the Church and Eusebios wants to place that in a context of his habitual forbearance and patience rather than doctrinal unsoundness: *De vita Constantini* 4.54.2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 174), 142–143.

⁵³ *De vita Constantini* 2.13.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 100), 54.

⁵⁴ *Alexiad* 8.6.1 (trans. Sewter 259), 250.

⁵⁵ His historian even expresses some impatience: "he was repaid by all of them with base ingratitude": *Alexiad* 14.3.5–6 (trans. Sewter 446–447), 436. See also 9.7.5–6 (barbarian assassin) and 12.7.4 (Gregory Taronites) (trans. Sewter 283–284, 388), 273–274, 377–378.

⁵⁶ *Theophanes Continuatus* Basil I 34, 38, 45 (trans. Stallman 54, 58, 68) 263, 267–268, 277.

That merciful character is made increasingly apparent from Books Nine to Thirteen. In Book Nine, Alexios gives a general amnesty being, unlike Basil II, “unwilling to mutilate a great host of people”,⁵⁷ and when he grants peace to the enemy – “he was weary and loathed civil war. The men were Dalmatians, but they were still Christians”⁵⁸ – Komnene subtly expands the idea of his empire as a spiritual empire over Christendom in preparation for the advent of the First Crusade. He plays a providential role towards the Crusaders, defends the City, wins a bloodless victory at Nicaea and commissions a largely bloodless campaign of reconquest along the coast. As Bohemond involves the western Church in his war against Byzantium, Komnene builds Alexios up further as the pacific emperor and Man of God. Irene becomes prominent as she travels with him, ministering to him and dispensing charity in the light of her name,⁵⁹ and in the same book Twelve Komnene proclaims that “peace is the end of all wars”.⁶⁰ The Treaty of Devol in Book Thirteen underlines this objective. Although in practice it breaks down, its massive rhetoric stands as a monument to Alexios’ rightness and defence of orthodoxy without bloodshed.

An emperor for peace is not a weakling, but an emperor who has proved himself a powerful warrior⁶¹ and can now sit in his tent receiving foreign leaders who have learnt to fear his name. He has reinaugurated the *Pax Romana*. This is the Constantine who gives Alexios *gravitas* in the last books, as he adapts his strategies to the new Frankish presence.

Book Fourteen is committed to sweeping recapitulations as the history moves towards its sequence of conclusions.⁶² The emperor who fights on two or more fronts in almost every book reappears;⁶³ likewise the merciful emperor who “glared at the rebel angrily” and then forgives and even rewards him.⁶⁴ The great fighting emperor reappears, if more in the rhetoric than the action, in a series of last campaigns that bear a piecemeal resemblance to Constantine’s Last Campaign against the Persians. Indeed, it is difficult *not* to see in Alexios’ late wars a cultural memory of that last campaign. Eusebios’ interest in war was cursory: his brief account of the campaign (by textual tradition)⁶⁵ focused on Constantine’s conversion of his tent of war into a church, the immediate capitulation of the Persians

⁵⁷ *Alexiad* 9.8.4 (trans. Sewter 286), 276.

⁵⁸ *Alexiad* 9.10.1 (trans. Sewter 289), 279–280.

⁵⁹ *Alexiad* 12.3.8 (trans. Sewter 377), 367.

⁶⁰ *Alexiad* 12.5.2 (trans. Sewter 381), 371.

⁶¹ “By nature...he was a man of peace, but when...forced...he would become most warlike”: *ibid*.

⁶² The recapitulations in Fourteen are dense and can be almost over-rich. The emperor sets out in his chariot because his feet are too painful to ride: he is army-leader, charioteer (“a whip in his right hand”) and mortal sufferer with the demeanour of a saint (“he put heart into all of them by his gestures and words, smiling pleasantly and chatting with them”). *Alexiad* 14.5.2 (trans. Sewter 453), 443. This time it is the Turks who flee from his shadow. The campaign is entrusted to his general Kamytzes, and mostly concerns his courageous escape, but Alexios appears at the centre of one engagement where he “swooped down on the Turks like a thunderbolt” (ὡς κεραυνὸς τοῖς Τούρκοις): *Alexiad* 14.5.7 (trans. Sewter 455), 446–447, like the Alexios in Book Seven, ὡς πῦρ κατὰ τὸν Σκυθῶν”: *Alexiad* 7.3.10 (trans. Sewter 226), 213. A little later he is seen grieving over the loss of two officers, as he did over the Archontopouli in Seven (*Alexiad* 7.7.2 (trans. Sewter 232), 221: “if...he had lost one man, however low his rank, he looked upon his victory as nothing” (*Alexiad* 14.6.4 (trans. Sewter 457), 448. But the high points in this last campaign are clear.

⁶³ “As thick and fast as snowflakes troubles descended on the emperor: from the sea the admirals of Pisa, Genoa and Lombardy...on the mainland the emir Saisan...”: *Alexiad* 14.3.1 (trans. Sewter 445), 434.

⁶⁴ *Alexiad* 14.3.5 (trans. Sewter 446), 436.

⁶⁵ According to the supplement for the lacuna at 4.57 in the text itself, included by Cameron and Stuart 175.

through fear of him and his gracious reception of their embassy for peace. As if following Eusebian tradition, Alexios more or less replicates all three: he does some building (if not a church) to supervise the Frankish and Turkish campaigns together; the Franks capitulate through fear of him; the Turks send “envoys from Persia”.⁶⁶ Komnene makes a bigger scene of their meeting, with Alexios enthroned and φοβερός, but just as Constantine “the most pacific emperor...gladly came to friendly terms”⁶⁷ so Alexios “acknowledged that he welcomed and desired peace with all”.⁶⁸ It is so high a point in the late narrative that Komnene jumps ahead of events: “[t]hereafter we enjoyed peace until the end of his life”. The same point marks the difference between the first Constantine and the last, for whereas Constantine inaugurated a new kind of Roman Empire, ruling through his sons after his death,⁶⁹ Alexios’ empire marked by “peace with all” cannot survive him. As she leads up to naming Constantine she flags the theme of finality: “but with him all the benefits disappeared and his efforts came to nothing through the stupidity of those who inherited his throne.”⁷⁰

War does start up again, and her rhetorical extensions cover some elisions in the sequence of events,⁷¹ but in their course she anticipates “the end of his life” in another way. Here too is possibly a trace of something that Eusebios reported of Constantine as “unforgettable, a deed which the marvellous man did in our own presence”. When listening to “an address about the Saviour’s tomb...he stood up...When we begged him to rest on the imperial throne...he would not do so, but...[said] it was a holy thing to listen to divinity standing up.”⁷² Komnene develops a similar motif into a picture of Alexios as a kind of stylite. He maintains the peace by diplomacy even more than by his wars. All day the Kelts had access to him, talking “on and on with an endless stream of petitions”, and following him at night into his private apartments when “after remaining without food all through the day, the emperor would...retire”.

Only one man, the emperor, faced this tremendous task without weakening...Hundreds of people were talking...one...passed the conversation on to another...They stood only in these intervals but he all the time...It was for this reason...that the emperor was attacked by the pain in his feet.⁷³

His patience is wondered at as something almost saintly. And so begins his final illness.

Komnene’s own role also undergoes some change as she takes the *Alexiad* a step away from classicizing history towards the hagiographical Life. Hagiographers give personal

⁶⁶ *Alexiad* 14.3.8 (trans. Sewter 447), 437–438. Persia is seldom mentioned in the *Alexiad* but it is specified in connexion with Manzikert at the start of Book One. Alexios is preoccupied here with that great loss, the empire’s shadowline at the start of his own fighting life. Even so, the term strikes one small echo among many from the Constantinian prototype.

⁶⁷ *De vita Constantini* 4.57 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 175), see note 65.

⁶⁸ *Alexiad* 14.3.9 (trans. Sewter 448), 438.

⁶⁹ *De vita Constantini* 1.1.1–3, 4.71.2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 67, 181), 15, 149–150.

⁷⁰ *Alexiad* 14.3.9 (trans. Sewter 448), 438.

⁷¹ For instance, she takes Alexios back to the City for a dissertation on his handling of “the Kelts”, returns him to Damalis where “the Kelts...all crossed, descending on him thick as snowflakes” (*Alexiad* 14.5.1 (trans. Sewter 452), 443, and suddenly sends him off in a war-chariot to meet a Turkish invasion.

⁷² *De vita Constantini* 4.33.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 165), 132.

⁷³ *Alexiad* 14.4.5–8 (trans. Sewter 450–51), 443. The two short preceding quotations are from the same passage.

testimony humbly: saints do not display their asceticism and piety and these can be attested only by their intimates, usually followers. She invokes new credentials more like those of a monastic narrator: she shared the hardships of Alexios' campaigns in a version of the ascetic life ("we did not live a sheltered, pampered existence");⁷⁴ she is writing decades later when court politics no longer apply and those who knew Alexios "tell the bare facts";⁷⁵ she herself is a kind of social outcast or hermit ("I pass my time in obscurity and devote myself to my books and the worship of God");⁷⁶ her sources are humble and the more to be trusted for that.

"My material...has been gathered from insignificant writings, absolutely devoid of literary pretensions, and from old soldiers...who...[became] monks...they adhered closely to the truth...with no attempt at style..."⁷⁷

Subtly she edges the history from the testimonial region of Psellos towards the specialized form of hagiography developed by Eusebios: the Life of a ruler whose virtue shines through his politics like the sun and warms the humblest.

With this change she allows herself a certain elevation of manner and freedom from scepticism. When Kamytzes shows himself to the people, and gives them news of his own and the emperor's actions on their behalf:

"The inhabitants of Constantinople with one mouth and voice acclaimed Alexios, sang his praises, lauded him to the skies, blessed him for his leadership, could not contain themselves for joy because of him. They escorted Kamytzes to his home filled with happiness and a few days later welcomed the emperor as a victor crowned with laurels, an invincible general, indomitable ruler, *sebastos* and autocrat."⁷⁸

That passage shows none of the cynicism of previous crowd-scenes⁷⁹ and is surely in Constantinian mode. Eusebios' prototype at the end of his *Church History* runs as follows:

"Men had now lost all fear of their former oppressors; day after day they kept dazzling festival; light was everywhere, and men who once dared not look up greeted each other with smiling faces and shining eyes. They danced and sang in city and country alike, giving honour first of all to God...and then to the pious emperor...In every city the victorious emperor published decrees full of humanity and laws that gave proof of munificence and true piety."⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *Alexiad* 14.7.4 (trans. Sewter 459), 451.

⁷⁵ *Alexiad* 14.7.5 (trans. Sewter 460), 452.

⁷⁶ *Alexiad* 14.7.6 (trans. Sewter 460), 452.

⁷⁷ Wherever she had them from, then, these documents "with no attempt at style" have not been written up by her husband: *Alexiad* 14.7.7 (trans. Sewter 461), 452.

⁷⁸ *Alexiad* 14.7.8 (trans. Sewter 461), 453.

⁷⁹ For example, *Alexiad* 1.2.6 (trans. Sewter 35), 15, and *Alexiad* 9.9.5 (trans. Sewter 289), 278–279.

⁸⁰ Eusebios 10.9.7, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*, ed. H.J. Lawlor (Cambridge, Mass. 1964), 478; *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, trans. G.A. Williamson (Middlesex 1965), 413–414.

Alexios, too, shows his humanity and piety as “he turned his attention to the courts of justice and the laws”, with especial care for orphans and widows, and to his only recreation, “to ‘search the Scriptures’”.⁸¹

Komnene is adept at shaping a mass of historic circumstance in such a way as to make her large mythic interpretations seem to emerge as if irresistibly from events. She has built up her Constantinian likeness slowly, even secretly, then brought it nearer the surface in the course of Book Fourteen. When Alexios goes to Philippopolis to fight the Cumans – who are “repelled by the mere mention of his name”,⁸² as the Persians were by Constantine’s – he stays to convert the mixed population of Armenians, Bogomils and Manichaeans. Like Constantine, he seeks to rule by reason. Constantine, writing to the provincials of the east, urged the view that “those whose intellect approaches that topic by a correct scientific method” will naturally come to “the knowledge of God”.⁸³ Later, when the churches were in dispute, “he personally vitalized with his own intellectual effort”⁸⁴ his orders for a reconciliation; “he thought that he ought to rule his subjects with instructive argument, and establish his whole imperial rule as rational”.⁸⁵ Alexios – who has always taken pains to explain his actions to the public, and shown measured attitudes to mathematics, astrology and “the art of divination”⁸⁶ – converts the heretics of Philippopolis entirely by his intellectual effort. “From early morning till...evening...he instructed them in the orthodox faith...[with] untiring arguments and...frequent admonitions. [Many] were baptised.”⁸⁷

“Three champions of the Manichaeans...were summoned to meet him every day and engage in a war of words...There they stood, the three of them, sharpening themselves up for the fray, as though they were boar’s tusks...”⁸⁸

Two remain obdurate and are sent to Constantinople “to die a lonely death in their sins”⁸⁹ but the mass of the people is converted by Alexios’ “own intellectual effort”, his “rational rule”. The parallel almost announces itself.

“On this occasion it was for an apostolic mission, not for operations of war, that he armed himself against the Manichaeans. And I myself would call him “the thirteenth apostle” – though some ascribe that honour to Constantine the Great. However it seems to me that either Alexius ought to be ranked with the Emperor Constantine, or...he should follow immediately after Constantine in both roles – as emperor and as apostle.”⁹⁰

Too subtle to say Alexios is like Constantine, she makes the comparison in reverse: only Constantine is worthy to be brought up beside him. She does it with an artful artlessness, bypassing Constantine for his greater predecessor Paul and, as with Irene, using the Pauline metaphor of spiritual armour to translate Alexios’ military role into an apostolic one. Then,

⁸¹ *Alexiad* 14.7.9 (trans. Sewter 462), 453.

⁸² *Alexiad* 14.9.2 (trans. Sewter 467), 458.

⁸³ *De vita Constantini* 2.48.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 111–112), 68.

⁸⁴ *De vita Constantini* 4.41.4 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 168–169), 136.

⁸⁵ *De vita Constantini* 4.29.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 164), 131.

⁸⁶ *Alexiad* 6.7.2 (trans. Sewter 193), 181; see the whole of section 6.7 for Alexios’ balanced attitudes.

⁸⁷ *Alexiad* 14.8.9 (trans. Sewter 466–467), 457.

⁸⁸ *Alexiad* 14.9.3 (trans. Sewter 467), 458.

⁸⁹ *Alexiad* 14.9.5 (trans. Sewter 469), 460.

⁹⁰ *Alexiad* 14.8.8 (trans. Sewter 466), 457.

as if thinking aloud in a kind of dialogue with the cultivated reader, she adds that if Alexios is the thirteenth apostle he must be seen as a Second Constantine as well. It is more like a concession than a boast. The rhetorical effect⁹¹ is to isolate the importance of the double role.

This double role was defined as essential by Eusebios' Constantine: "My first concern was that the attitude towards the Divinity of all the provinces should be united in one consistent view, and my second that I might restore and heal the body of the republic which lay severely wounded...I began to think out the former with the hidden eye of reason, and I tried to rectify the latter by the power of the military arm."⁹² The two aspects of the Empire are acknowledged by Constantine in his letters in both Latin and Greek sent to both Church and military authorities.

In the *Alexiad*, they take the dual form of Greek classicism and Christianity, its sacred texts always given the pre-eminence. Alexios' clear understanding of his twinned task is particularly explicit in the final books: "the perils...endured for the well-being of the Roman people...and the travails he suffered on behalf of the Christians".⁹³ The first requires "the operations of war" and, in the peace-terms with the Turks, the restoration of imperial territories as they were before Manzikert: "I refer to the lands where you used to dwell before Romanus Diogenes became emperor..."⁹⁴ That is, to restore the earthly Rome. The travails for "the Christians" know no boundaries, applying to Christians within the Empire and without. Constantine also crossed boundaries, if different ones, when he called himself a bishop "over those outside" the Church.⁹⁵

By withholding her comparison until so late, she makes two strategic gains: she gives substance to her claim before she makes it and she focuses on Constantine at the point of death: the "thirteenth apostle" being his epitaph for himself. By exposing the likeness there she can work it through the final books to re-describe Alexios as not only *the* Second Constantine, but also the Last. Contained in this is the principle that everything Alexios does to fill the role must take it further, make it larger or more nearly final. Thus, Constantine reinstituted a newly Christian settlement when "in...Palestine Constantia endorsed the saving religion...It was designated a city, which it had not been before, and exchanged its name for the superior title of the Emperor's religious sister".⁹⁶ Alexios, however, does more when he rewards the Manichaeans he has converted in Philippopolis: he "built a city for them quite near", giving it his own name as well as plough-land, vineyards, houses and immutable rights, a kind of utopia in which even "the women could inherit".⁹⁷

Once Komnene states her case, all the resemblances start to form a magnetic field around it, both those already embedded in the history and the larger ones to come. It seems remarkable that she has kept them under cover for so long, but her discipline is rewarded. The *Vita*, for example, talked of "secret plots" against the young pre-imperial Constantine so that "he sought safety in flight, in this also preserving his likeness to the great prophet

⁹¹ Fairly well represented by Sewter except that Komnene ends the mini-peroration with Alexios' name.

⁹² *De vita Constantini* 2.65.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 116), 74.

⁹³ *Alexiad* 14.7.3 (trans. Sewter 459), 450.

⁹⁴ *Alexiad* 15.6.5 (trans. Sewter 488), 478.

⁹⁵ *De vita Constantini* 4.24 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 161), 128.

⁹⁶ *De vita Constantini* 4.38 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 167), 135.

⁹⁷ *Alexiad* 14.9.4 (trans. Sewter 468), 459.

Moses".⁹⁸ Alexios had secret plots against him in Book Two that forced him into flight yet, far from using the parallel to justify his seizing power, Komnene merely touches on Moses in Book Five,⁹⁹ and leaves the big comparison with Moses to Fifteen. By reserving his name and covering his likeness, she can bring Constantine forward as a particularly compelling exemplar for these final books as one who stood at the threshold of the Old Rome and the New.

In Book Fifteen, before his last campaign, Alexios plays a waiting game and is much criticized.¹⁰⁰ In her rousing speech in his defence, Komnene recapitulates the Alexios who keeps his own counsel and is misjudged until time reveals the glory of his strategy. She calls on Homer and the "pages of history" to support her claim that "sound planning calls for courage" and that at times "we change our tactics and seek to conquer without bloodshed".¹⁰¹ Her speech implies a thesaurus of exemplars (Odysseus and Constantine among them, together with Alexios' own younger self)¹⁰² to match her praise for Alexios' great armoury of strategies.

The main theme of this waiting period is "the new battle-formation that he himself had invented,"¹⁰³ as he waits, he trains his army to understand and use it. The whole subsequent campaign is represented as a march in that formation with brief intervals of fighting and capture, and what produces Roman victory is at once completely traditional and the reward for Alexios' innovation. "The march ...went so smoothly that to the barbarians they seemed not to be moving at all. All through that day the enemy attacked...unable to disrupt the Roman forces".¹⁰⁴ The Caesar "marched on with ranks intact and the soldiers in perfect order".¹⁰⁵ The sultan "was not strong enough to disrupt the tight formation of the Romans and after assailing what appeared to be walls of steel, he was repulsed with nothing achieved".¹⁰⁶ This was always the Roman strength, but Alexios has adapted it to Turkish practice. He maintains tradition through his innovations.

When he lays down peace-terms to the sultan, he declares what his campaign has always been about – Manzikert:

"I refer to the lands where you used to dwell before Roman Diogenes became emperor...It would be wise, therefore, to choose peace rather than war, to refrain from crossing the frontiers of the Empire and to be content with your own territories."¹⁰⁷

Thus, he "restore[s] and heal[s] the body of the republic". The new formation is not only a means to but already an analogue for a restored, reunified empire. As these last books move into eschatology, he goes even beyond the first Constantine: as the army processes

⁹⁸ *De vita Constantini* 1.20.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 77), 26.

⁹⁹ "[T]he darkness over Egypt long ago": *Alexiad* 5.6.3 (trans. Sewter 171), 158.

¹⁰⁰ "Not only in dark corners, but quite brazenly in squares, on highways and at cross-roads": *Alexiad* 15.3.1 (trans. Sewter 476), 466.

¹⁰¹ *Alexiad* 15.3.2 (trans. Sewter 477), 467.

¹⁰² When she says towards the end of this peroration, 15.3.3. (trans. Sewter 477), 467–468, that he had "an extraordinary love of danger[s]...marching into them bareheaded", the young emperor of Book IV comes briefly but vividly into mind.

¹⁰³ *Alexiad* 15.3.5 (trans. Sewter 478), 468.

¹⁰⁴ *Alexiad* 15.5.2 (trans. Sewter 484), 474–475.

¹⁰⁵ *Alexiad* 15.5.3 (trans. Sewter 485), 475.

¹⁰⁶ *Alexiad* 15.6.3 (trans. Sewter 487), 477.

¹⁰⁷ *Alexiad* 15.6.5 (trans. Sewter 488), 478.

homeward under his protection and in its formation, “Alexius at the head of the line rode on like...a pillar of fire...”¹⁰⁸ He is like Moses and the mystery that guided Moses. He is Constantine and more.

A new theme that has long been evident, but dormant is emerging: the gathering-in of peoples:

“The native inhabitants, Romans who were fleeing from Turkish vengeance, followed them of their own free will; there were women with babies, even men and children, all seeking refuge with the emperor, as if he were some kind of sanctuary. The lines were now drawn up in the new formation, with all the prisoners in the centre, as well as the women and children...if you had seen it, you would have said that these men marching in his new formation constituted a city with bastions, living and on the move.”¹⁰⁹

Then, as the metaphor is realized, the theme becomes the actual city, house of peoples. As the legendary Constantine understood, it was cities that distinguished the Graeco-Roman tradition. He himself had founded the new Rome and constructed a New Jerusalem “facing the famous Jerusalem of old”.¹¹⁰ On Alexios’ return to Constantinople, he forbade any “magnificent reception”: he “was wholly occupied in tending the prisoners and strangers”. Some of the children were taken to the orphanage he had “personally founded...near the enormous church dedicated to the great apostle Paul; here, inside the capital city, he built a second city.”¹¹¹ Carefully, Komnene does not say when that second city was built. In a remarkable piece of narrative shaping, a building founded earlier for traditional charitable purposes has been shifted as if chronologically and transformed. Its place in Alexios’ story is here: an Orphanage in the likeness of the City of God.

“The famous Alexander of Macedon might well boast of Alexandria in Egypt, Bucephale in Media and Lysimachia in Ethiopia, but the Emperor Alexius found more pleasure and pride in this Orphanage than in any of the cities he founded...all over the Empire.”¹¹²

This second city is *his* New Jerusalem in *his* New Rome. The poor and the disabled housed in it do not have to work. All their material needs are met. All that is asked of them is that they help and tend each other. It is a spiritual Jerusalem. And as a City-within-the-City it attests that the kingdom of God is within.

Eusebios’ Constantine “alone of all the Roman emperors has honoured God...proclaimed to all the word of Christ...honoured his Church...destroyed all polytheistic error...”¹¹³ Under him “alone the Catholic Church of God shone forth gathered into itself, with no heretical or schismatic group left anywhere in the world”.¹¹⁴ Alexios does what he can from Book Five to achieve the same result. The last act of his life is a highly charged piece of

¹⁰⁸ *Alexiad* 15.5.2 (trans. Sewter 484), 474.

¹⁰⁹ *Alexiad* 15.4.9 (trans. Sewter 483–484), 473.

¹¹⁰ *De vita Constantini* 3.33.1 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 135), 99.

¹¹¹ *Alexiad* 15.7.2–4 (trans. Sewter 492), 482. The previous two brief quotations are from the same passage.

¹¹² *Alexiad* 15.7.8 (trans. Sewter 495), 484.

¹¹³ *De vita Constantini* 4.75 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 182), 150–151.

¹¹⁴ *De vita Constantini* 3.66.3 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 153), 119.

theatre to destroy religious error in the capital itself. He takes his earlier “play-acting”¹¹⁵ further to impersonate an angry Christ at the Last Judgment, using the same trick as Constantine’s father when he ordered his household to divide into two groups: both do it to sift souls.¹¹⁶ The scene is terrifying: two huge pyres, the crowd of Bogomils and Christians all expecting death, the people protesting at the injustice. At the actual burning, again the whole community is present and the ceremony is presided over by Alexios himself. The event resembles an exorcism and seems to take place at the threshold of two worlds. The fire simulates while foreshadowing the fires of hell. Like the new city, the monarchy of God has moved into eschatology.

The scene is a psychological pivot from the creative triumphs of the Second Constantine to the pain-filled death of the Last. As Komnene approaches this death she changes genre. History gives way to tragedy, then narrows into dirge: history being, as it were, at an end. Only in Alexios did the Empire that she celebrates exist. She gives what doctors call a history, but not history as she has practiced it – for war and politics have disappeared and, without those, there is no classicizing military history. She departs from the precedent set by Constantine and eminent in the *Life of Basil*: speeches made to the most powerful, oaths of loyalty asked for and given. Not only is the succession not formalized in the usual ways but the politics of the succession are not mentioned. War, too, is out of the frame. The body politic is wholly situated in the dying body. Perception passes unimpeded between the subjective and the universal: subjectively, the universe dies with the individual; rhetorically, the universe dies with the emperor Alexios.

There is one final Constantinian image. Eusebios repeatedly likened Constantine to the sun in such a way as to co-opt his father’s and his own previous helioteic monotheism into his Christianity, as well as to suggest a heavenly dispensation shining through his earthly one.¹¹⁷ Komnene reserves the metaphor until the end. When Alexios dies: “my sun went down”, “I lost the shining light of the world”.¹¹⁸ In the clever economy of her work, Constantine and Alexios stand as the Alpha and the Omega of the Roman-Christian Empire. Constantine was first to embrace the Christian faith and receive baptism. “Alone of all the Emperors from the beginning of time Constantine was initiated by rebirth in the mysteries of Christ...”.¹¹⁹ Alexios also stood alone, “as if” the first: “in him alone the true character of an emperor was seen again in the Roman court...as if...for the first time, the imperial dignity dwelt like some guest in the Empire of the Romans”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ *Alexiad* 15.8.4 (trans. Sewter 498), 487.

¹¹⁶ Constantius employs the “trick” to find out who among his household is a true believer, threatening to dismiss those who refused to “sacrifice to the demons” but in fact dismissing the others: *De vita Constantini* 1.16.1–2 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 75–76), 23–24.

¹¹⁷ *De vita Constantini* 1.43.3 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 87), 38.

¹¹⁸ *Alexiad* 15.11.20, 21 (trans. Sewter 513, 514), 503, 504.

¹¹⁹ *De vita Constantini* 4.62.4 (trans. Cameron & Stuart 178), 146.

¹²⁰ *Alexiad* 12.5.2 (trans. Sewter 381), 371.

Erika Gielen

Joseph the Philosopher, an Outstanding Outsider: Philosophy and Rhetoric at the Court of Andronicus II

By you [i.e., Andronicus II], the noblemen are even nobler, as well as the priesthood more honorable, the committee of wise men wiser, the city walls stronger, and, in short, by you, we ourselves, we all have grown in excellence. But o that immense and unimaginable web of disasters! Gone is the order of the world! Gone the adornment of the cities! Gone the school of orators and philosophers that excels every Academy and Lyceum and Attic Stoa!¹

In this passage, taken from his *Historia Romana*, the Byzantine scholar Nicephorus Gregoras (ca. 1290 – after 1358) deplores the enormous social and economic calamities and disasters in Byzantium during the last years of the reign of Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282–1328). However, in spite of the fact that the power of the Byzantine emperor and his officials was fast crumbling away in both remote and nearby territories of the former East-Roman Empire, an essential characteristic of that same period was a true revival of ancient Greek culture, which took shape in, among other things, imperial patronage.²

The aim of this paper is to clarify the part of the learned monk Joseph the Philosopher, also called Rhakendytēs, within this renaissance under the impetus of the emperor Andronicus II. Joseph (ca. 1260 – ca. 1330)³ originated from Ithaca. After having declined

¹ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, I, 471, 5–12 (ed. I. Bekker & L. Schopen, *Nicephori Gregorae historiae Byzantinae* [CSHB, Bonn 1829]): Διὰ σοῦ γὰρ καὶ οἱ εὐγενεῖς εὐγενέστεροι καθεστῆκασιν καὶ ὁ τῶν ἱερῶν δῆμος σεμνότερος καὶ ὁ τῶν σοφῶν κατάλογος σοφώτερος καὶ τὰ τεῖχη τῶν πόλεων ισχυρότερα καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν ἅπαντες διὰ σοῦ βελτίους γεγόναμεν ἑαυτῶν. Ἀλλ’ ὦ τῆς ἀμετρήτου καὶ ἀνεικάστου πλοκῆς τῶν δεινῶν. Οἴχεται ἡ τοῦ κόσμου πολιτεία· οἴχεται ὁ τῶν πόλεων κόσμος· οἴχεται τὸ τῶν ῥητόρων καὶ φιλοσόφων γυμνάσιον τὸ πᾶσαν ὑπερβαῖνον Ἀκαδημίαν καὶ Λύκειον καὶ Στοὰν Ἀττικὴν.

² See, for example, on Andronicus’ “building politics”, Nicephorus Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, I, 274, 7–275, 13. See also V. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328. Verfall und Zerstörung, Restaurierung, Umbau und Neubau von Profan- und Sakralbauten*, Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 1 (Wiesbaden 1994).

³ Our most important contemporary source on Joseph’s life is Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινα φίλον ἐπὶ τῇ τελευτῇ τοῦ φιλοσοφώτατου καὶ ὁσιωτάτου νέου Ἰωσήφ* (ed. M. Treu, “Der Philosoph Joseph”, *BZ* 8 (1899), 1–64 [2–31]). See also A. Sideras, *Die byzantinischen Grabreden. Prosopographie, Datierung, Überlieferung 142 Epitaphien und Monodien aus dem byzantinischen Jahrtausend*, Wiener byzantinische Studien 19 (Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1994), 55–56. Up to now, the standard works on Joseph the Philosopher are – chronologically arranged – the following: M. Treu, “Der Philosoph Joseph”, *BZ* 8 (1899), 1–64; D.J. Dräseke, “Zum Philosophen Joseph”, *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 42 (1899), 612–620; N. Terzaghi, “Sulla composizione dell’ *Enciclopedia* del filosofo Giuseppe”, *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 10 (1902), 121–132; G. Pentogalos, “Ἰωσήφ Ῥακενδύτου θρησκευτικοὶ ὕμνοι”, *Ἑλληνικά* 23 (1970), 114–118; R. Criscuolo, “Note sull’ *Encyclopedia* del filosofo Giuseppe”, *Byzantion* 44 (1974), 255–281; D. Stiennon, “Joseph le philosophe”, in M. Viller, F. Cavallera et al. (eds), *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, 8 (Paris 1974), 1388–1392; V. Conticello,

several offers to take part in the island's government, he spent some time in various monasteries in Thessaloniki, Thessaly, on some small islets nearby and on Mount Athos. Probably somewhere about 1308, Joseph arrived in Constantinople, where he became one of the most popular scholars of his time. Some time before the spring of 1321, he left the capital of the Byzantine Empire, to spend the last years of his life in a monastery, again in Thessaloniki. There he wrote his *Synopsis Variarum Disciplinarum*, a monumental *encyclopedia* of all Byzantine learning – both secular and theological.⁴

The first part of this paper consists of a short analysis of the relation between rhetoric and imperial power, followed by a discussion of how Joseph dealt with this in his own particular way. Secondly, we will focus on Joseph's position at Andronicus' court – especially how he differed from the officials and other scholars there in his so-called *Weltanschauung*.

Rhetoric and Imperial Power

When Joseph, in the introduction to his work, refers to the city of Constantinople, he calls it the ἔδαφος τῶν λόγων, the foundation of all knowledge.⁵

The city was worth the flattering words. In this time, indeed, the capital of the Byzantine Empire was marked by a great cultural *renaissance*.⁶ Emperor Andronicus' intelligence and cultural curiosity made him surround himself with philosophers, poets and the most renowned scientists. He created, so to say, a breeding ground for 'elite-clubs' of distinguished *litterati*, who often combined their literary and scholarly ambitions with a career in the imperial administration or the church.⁷

"Pseudo-Cyril's 'De SS. Trinitate'. A Compilation of Joseph the Philosopher", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995), 117–129.

⁴ The topics treated are rhetoric, logic, physics, anthropology, psychology and physiology, mathematics, ethics and theology. For Joseph's *Synopsis Variarum Disciplinarum* as a *synopsis of Byzantine learning*, see E. Gielen, "Ad maiorem Dei Gloriam. Joseph Rhakendytēs' Synopsis of Byzantine Learning" in *Encyclopedism before the Enlightenment* (forthcoming, Cambridge 2011)..

⁵ Τοῦ σοφωτάτου καὶ λογιωτάτου ῥακενδύτου κυροῦ Ἰωσήφ σύννομος ἐν ἐπιτομῇ εἰ τὰ κατ' αὐτόν, 36, line 16 (ed. Treu, "Philosoph Joseph", 34–38). From now on, I will refer to this text as Joseph Rhak, *Epitome*.

⁶ For a good (political and cultural) overview, see, for example, S. Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* (Cambridge 1970); I. Ševčenko, "Théodore Métochites, Chora et les courants intellectuels de l'époque", in *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Association Internationale des Études Byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968* (Bibliothèque de l'Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et post-Byzantines de Venise 4, Venice 1971), 14–39; I. Ševčenko, "The Palaeologan Renaissance", in W. Treagold (ed.), *Renaissances Before the Renaissance. Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Stanford 1984), 144–171; D.M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453* (Cambridge 1993²); E. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261–c.1360)* (The Medieval Mediterranean Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453, 27, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2000). Ševčenko, "Palaeologan Renaissance" (1984), 145, however, does not like the term *renaissance*, which he wishes to reserve for that unique event in European – predominantly but not exclusively Western European – history, but, instead, prefers to talk about the *Palaeologan revival*.

⁷ During his political career, Theodorus Metochites, for example, successively held the position of λογοθέτης τῶν ἀγελῶν (supervisor of the state herds of horses and mules), λογοθέτης τοῦ γενικοῦ (assessment of land and other taxes) and of μέγας λογοθέτης ('prime minister'). At the same time, he was a prolific author of works dealing with very diverse topics, like astronomy, Aristotelian philosophy and poetry. On Theodorus Metochites, see, for example, Ševčenko, "Théodore Métochites" (1971); A-M. Talbot, "Metochites, Theodore", *ODB*, 1357–1358; M. Bazzani, "Theodore Metochites, a Byzantine Humanist", *Byzantion* 76 (2006), 32–52. On the functions of the λογοῦται,

This should not surprise us. According to the emperor and his advisors, to obtain imperial, or, in some cases, aristocratic, patronage, and – if striven for – political power as a highly placed bureaucrat, a clear mark of literary and cultural interest and knowledge, and especially mastery of the art of rhetoric were indispensable.⁸ This was what Andronicus' *grand logothete*, Theodorus Metochites (1270–1332) impressed on his pupil Nicephorus Gregoras in one of his poems:

*Take thought...for eloquent speech which elegantly effects a seemly and graceful expression of thought...For it is meet for a man not only to be wise inside, but also to bring forth his thoughts most delightfully, most gracefully, that therefore he may be worthy of wonder...Nor are you to neglect to make your speech as noble and fluent as can be, for in the eyes of the many and in public such speech is wont to win the price.*⁹

The so-called σύλλογοι¹⁰ were such meetings – whether or not at court – on which intellectuals as well as intellectuals *in spe* got the opportunity to present their scholarly skills and knowledge by giving oral presentations. In one of his letters, Thomas Magister (ca. 1275 – after 1374), a versatile and prolific scholar from Thessaloniki, invited his teacher Joseph the Philosopher to one of those scholarly meetings in the city of Thessaloniki, where *surely his wisdom would be greatly honored*.¹¹

see A. Semenov, “Über Ursprung und Bedeutung des Amtes der Logotheten in Byzanz”, *BZ* 19 (1910), 440–449; R. Guiland, “Les logothètes”, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 29 (1971), 5–10.

⁸ See T.M. Conley, “Byzantine Criticism and the Uses of Literature”, in A. Minnis & I. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume II The Middle Ages* (Cambridge 2005), 669–692 (687); D.G. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology & Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge 2007), 19–20.

⁹ *Εἰς τὸν σοφὸν Νικηφόρον τὸν Γρηγορᾶν ὑποθῆκαι καὶ περὶ τῶν οἰκείων συνταγμάτων*, 28, line 36 – 30, line 50 (ed. Ševčenko & J. Featherstone, *Two Poems by Theodore Metochites* (Brookline (Mass.) 1981). See also Nicephorus Gregoras, *Phlorentios*, lines 801–812 (ed. and trans. P.L.M. Leone, *Fiorenzo o intorno alla sapienza*, Byzantina et Neo-Hellenica Neapolitana. Collana di studi e testi 4, Napoli 1975): “Αὕτη (i.e., grammar) γὰρ ὀπλίζει τὴν γλῶτταν καὶ ἄρρενα πρὸς τὸ λέγειν καὶ γράφειν ποιεῖ καὶ ταύτης ἄνευ νοῦς ἀνεκλάλητος ἢ σοφία· διὸ καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων σοφίας καὶ γλώττης αὕτη τὰς βίβλους ἐμπιπλώσα διαπερᾶν ποιεῖ τὸν αἰῶνα μετὰ τῆς μνήμης αὐτῶν. Τί δὲ ῥητορικῆς πέρι; μὲν καὶ ταύτης ἀμαθὴς εἶ,” Ξενοφάνης, “Μάταιος ἂν ᾦν”, φησὶν, “εἰ φιλοσοφίαν ἀφεις ἐς τὰ μηδενὸς ἄξια ἐμᾶντὸν ἀπρησχόλουν.” “Καὶ μὴν”, φησὶ Νικαγόρας, “κάν τοῖς βουλευτηρίοις κάν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις κάν τοῖς ἐγκωμίοις κάν τοῖς ψόγοις κάν τῷ βίῳ παντὶ μέγιστόν τι χρῆμα ῥητορικὴ καὶ ἀναγκαιότατον”.

¹⁰ See F. Fuchs, *Die Höheren Schulen von Konstantinopel im Mittelalter* (Byzantinisches Archiv 8, Leipzig 1926), 62–63; C.N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and the Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca.1310)* (Texts and Studies of the History of Cyprus 11, Nicosia 1982), 150; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* (2007), 19–21. Medvedev speaks of θέατρα, *unofficial and informal literary and philosophical scientific associations* (see I. Medvedev, “The so called θέατρα as a form of communication of the Byzantine Intellectuals in the 14th and 15th centuries”, in N.G. Moschonas (ed.), *Πρακτικά τοῦ Β' Διεθνoῦς Συμποσίου "Ἡ ἐπικοινωνία στοῦ Βυζάντιο"* [Athens 1993], 227–235). See also P. Marciniak, “Byzantine Theatron. A Place of Performance”, in M. Grünbart (ed.), *Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter* (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. 13, Berlin-New York 2007), 277–285; I. Toth, “Rhetorical Theatron in Late Byzantium: the Example of Palaiologan Imperial Orations”, in Grünbart (ed.), *Rhetorische Kultur* (2007), 429–448.

¹¹ Thomas Magister, *Τῷ ἰσαγγέλω πατρὶ καὶ φιλοσόφῳ Ἰωσήφ, περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλῶν καὶ Περσῶν ἐφόδῳ γεγεννημένων*, PG 145, col. 433, lines 15–20: Θορύβων μὲν οὖν ἐν συλλόγοις συνέχειαν, καὶ τὸ τείνειν ἀπνευστί, καὶ κρότων ὑπερβολήν, καὶ σπουδᾶς ἕξω παραδείγματος, οἷον ὁ δαιμόνιος παρ’

Since these σύλλογοι were an essential part of the literary and political life at Byzantium, *the art of speaking well* unsurprisingly formed an important – not to say the most important – part of the so-called ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία and higher education. Also Joseph held the same opinion as his contemporaries about the fundamental position and function of a rhetorical training, since his treatise Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς formed the opening, and thus all-supporting part of his *Synopsis Variarum Disciplinarum*.

To train future functionaries in eloquence as well as possible – so that, at the end, they were able to compose and deliver high-style speeches in fluent Attic language – teachers fell back on specialized rhetorical handbooks of Late Antiquity, and more specifically, of the Second Sophistic, especially the works of Hermogenes of Tarsus, Menander Rhetor and Aphthonius of Antioch which formed the core of Byzantine rhetorical education.¹²

Going back to Aristotle's *Rhetorica*,¹³ the basic subdivisions of rhetorical speech in those manuals were three in number: συμβουλευτικόν, deliberative; δικανικόν, judicial; and ἐπιδεικτικόν, epideictic. According to the anonymous author of a 5th-century work entitled *Prolegomena to Rhetoric*, the function of rhetoric varied with the type of polity. Whereas, for example, Athenian rhetoric in the 5th century B.C. served the aims of democracy, we (i.e., 'Byzantines') *practice rhetoric in faith and orthodoxy under an empire*.¹⁴ Given this political situation in Byzantium, dominated by the central power of the emperor – being God's representative on earth – it does not come as a surprise that both juridical and political, *symbolleutic* rhetoric gradually lost their importance. Epideictic oratory, on the other hand, greatly flourished in the Byzantine state.

In his *Progymnasmata*, Aphthonius¹⁵ stated there were four types of epideictic speech: ἐγκώμιον, encomium; ὕψος, invective; σύγκρισις, comparison; and ἡθοποιία, character sketch. We will focus on one – according to Elizabeth Jeffreys,¹⁶ *the most notable of them*, i.e., the βασιλικὸς λόγος, imperial oration, also specifically because this form of encomium

ἡμῖν ἀπολαύσεις, ἴσως οὐκ ἀγνοεῖς, εἰδὼς ὡς οὐκ εἰκὸς ἄλλως ἔχειν ἀπόντος τοὺς μόνω σοι τῶν ὄντων φίλωνεικοῦντας προσκεῖσθαι.

¹² For rhetoric in Byzantium, see G. Kustas, "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric", *Viator* 1 (1970), 53–73; *idem*, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric* (Analekta Vlatadon 17, Thessaloniki 1973); Constantinides, *Higher Education* (1982), especially 151–155; B. Schouler, "La définition de la rhétorique dans l'enseignement byzantin", *Byzantion* 65 (1995), 136–175; E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-fifth Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001* (Aldershot 2003); E. Jeffreys, "Rhetoric in Byzantium", in J. Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Malden 2007), 166–184; M. Mullett (ed.), "Rhetoric, Theory and the Imperative of Performance: Byzantium and now", in *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot 2007), 151–170.

¹³ Aristoteles, *Rhet.*, 1358a, 35 – 1358b, 9 (ed. W.B. Ross, *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* [Oxford Classical Texts, Oxford 1959=1969]): "Ἔστιν δὲ τῆς ῥητορικῆς εἶδη τρία τὸν ἀριθμὸν· τοσοῦτοι γάρ καὶ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ τῶν λόγων ὑπάρχουσιν ὄντες. σύγκειται μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τριῶν ὁ λόγος, ἐκ τε τοῦ λέγοντος καὶ περὶ οὗ λέγει καὶ πρὸς ὃν, καὶ τὸ τέλος πρὸς τοῦτόν ἐστιν, λέγω δὲ τὸν ἀκροατὴν. ἀνάγκη δὲ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἢ θεωρὸν εἶναι ἢ κριτὴν, κριτὴν δὲ ἢ τῶν γεγενημένων ἢ τῶν μελλόντων. ἔστιν δ' ὁ μὲν περὶ τῶν μελλόντων κρίνων ὁ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς, ὁ δὲ περὶ τῶν γεγενημένων οἶον ὁ δικαστικὸς, ὁ δὲ περὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ὁ θεωρὸς, ὅστ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἂν εἴη τρία γένη τῶν λόγων τῶν ῥητορικῶν, συμβουλευτικόν, δικανικόν, ἐπιδεικτικόν.

¹⁴ *Rhetorica anonyma. Prolegomena in artem rhetoricam (olim sub auctore Joanne Doxopatre)*, 41, lines 7–10 (ed. H. Rabe, *Prolegomenon sylloge* [Rhetores Graeci 14, Lipsiae 1931]).

¹⁵ Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata*, 21, lines 4–36, line 20 (ed. Rabe, *Aphthonii Progymnasmata* [Rhetores Graeci 10, Lipsiae 1926]). See also H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998), § 1129–1132.

¹⁶ E. Jeffreys, "Rhetoric" (2007), 173.

occupies a major place in Joseph's *Synopsis of Rhetoric*, the opening part of his *encyclopedia*.

Throughout the Byzantine era, the principal handbook on the βασιλικὸς λόγος was said to be Menander's chapter on this genre, which was part of his treatise on epideictic speech. There, its definition runs as follows: *The βασιλικὸς λόγος is an encomium of the emperor. Therefore, it will embrace a generally agreed amplification of the good things attaching to the emperor, but allows no ambivalent or disputed features, because of the extreme splendor of the person concerned. You should therefore elaborate it on the assumption that it relates to things universally acknowledged to be good.*¹⁷ The orator should successively discuss, Menander continues, the emperor's origin (i.e., his native country, family, birth and nurture),¹⁸ his education,¹⁹ qualities of his character²⁰ and his actions – both in times of war and peace, and divided according to the four cardinal virtues, i.e., ἀνδρεία, courage; δικαιοσύνη, justice; σωφροσύνη, temperance; and φρόνησις, prudence.²¹

This whole chapter was copied completely by Joseph, as part of his *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*.²² Scholars who traditionally describe the literary activity of Byzantine authors as nothing more than just "brainlessly copying and pasting", would probably welcome Joseph's rhetorical treatise as yet another example to confirm their deadly, disapproving opinion.²³ There is, of course, no good in denying the fact that Joseph 'stole' Menander's work. Yet, he did not do this without using his brains or creative spirit. What points to this, are the following findings.

¹⁷ Menander Rhetor, *Rhet.*, 368, 3–8 (ed., trans. and comm. D.A. Russell & N.G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* [Oxford 1981]): Ὁ βασιλικὸς λόγος ἐγκώμιόν ἐστι βασιλέως· οὐκοῦν αὐξησιν ὁμολογουμένην περιέξει τῶν προσόντων ἀγαθῶν βασιλεῖ, οὐδὲν δὲ ἀμφίβολον καὶ ἀμφιβητούμενον ἐπιδέχεται διὰ τὸ ἄγαν ἔνδοξον τὸ πρόσωπον εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐφ' ὁμολογουμένοις ἀγαθοῖς τὴν ἐργασίαν ποιήσει.

¹⁸ Menander Rhetor, *Rhet.*, 369, 18–371, 23: Μετὰ τὰ προ οἶμα ἐπὶ τὴν πατρίδα ἦξεις... πότερον ἔνδοξον αὐτοῦ τὸ γένος ἢ οὐ. ... πάλιν ζητεῖται τὰ περὶ γενέσεως αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως... ἐξῆς δὲ κεφάλαιόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀνατροφή...

¹⁹ Menander Rhetor, *Rhet.*, 371, 23–372, 2: Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ τὴν ἀνατροφήν ἔνδοξον ἔχη... , ζητήσεις τὴν παιδείαν...

²⁰ Menander Rhetor, *Rhet.*, 372, 2–12: Τὰ δὲ ἐπιτηδεύματα χώραν ἐξετάσεως ἔξει, ἐπιτηδεύματα δ' ἐστὶν ἄνευ ἀγωνιστικῶν πράξεων ἡθη...

²¹ Menander Rhetor, *Rhet.*, 372, 12–373, 14: Ἀκολουθεῖ τοίνυν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι λοιπὸν ὁ περὶ τῶν πράξεων λόγος... Τὰς τοιαύτας τοίνυν πράξεις διαιρήσεις δῖχα εἰς τε τὰ κατ' εἰρήνην καὶ τὰ κατὰ πόλεμον... διαίρει γὰρ ἀπανταχοῦ τὰς πράξεις ὧν ἂν μέλλης ἐγκωμιάζειν εἰς τὰς ἀρετὰς (ἀρεταὶ δὲ τέσσαρες εἰσιν, ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις) καὶ ὅρα τίνων ἀρετῶν εἰσιν αἱ πράξεις, καὶ εἰ κοινὰ τινές εἰσι τῶν πράξεων τῶν τε κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον καὶ κατ' εἰρήνην ἀρετῆς μιᾶς...

²² The *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς* of Joseph the Philosopher has been edited in *Rhetores Graeci*. Ex codicibus Florentinis, Mediolanensibus, Monacensibus, Neapolitanis, Parisiniensibus, Romanis, Venetis, Taurinensibus et Vindobonensibus suis aliorumque annotationibus instruxit indices locupletissimos adiecit Christianus Walz. Volumen III (Osnabrück 1832–1836 [= 1968]), 478–579. Menander's discussion of the βασιλικὸς λόγος is found on pp. 547–558. The whole text, however, ought to be published again, since Walz's edition is based on only a very limited number of manuscripts (Laurentianus LVIII, 2, Laurentianus LVIII, 20, Laurentianus LVIII 21, Vat. gr. 1361 and Ven. Marcianus VIII, 18), whereas Joseph's rhetorical synopsis has been handed down (in whole or in part) in at least thirteen more manuscripts, i.e., Berolinensis Phil. gr. 1573 (169) & 1617 (214), Bononiensis (Bibliotheca Universitaria) 3562, Parisinus gr. 3031, Riccardianus gr. 31, Scorialensis gr. ψ.I.6, Vat. Barberinus gr. 213, Vat. gr. 111, Vat. gr. 224, Vat. gr. 899, Ven. Marcianus IV, 24, Ven. Marcianus 529, Vindobonensis Phil. gr. 70.

²³ Treu, "Philosoph Joseph", 46, for example, states that *es liegt auch auf der Hand, dass wir auch die Synopsis der Rhetoric, den ersten Teil des Werkes, nicht für die eigene Arbeit Josephs halten dürfen*.

First of all, Joseph introduces the treatise of Menander with the following sentence: *So, after having discussed adequately the judicial and deliberative speech, let us already now speak about the panegyric genre. Let then serve the βασιλικὸς λόγος as example.*²⁴

Thus, according to Joseph, the very person of the emperor – and so the specific rhetorical subgenre he inspired – was the most ultimate source of inspiration for the whole genre of epideictic speech.

Other indications are the several passages of his *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς* in which Joseph uses the imperial panegyric to illustrate general rhetorical figures and techniques, which can, and even – for a good oration – must be applied and found in any form of *political speech* (i.e., συμβουλευτικός, δικανικός and πανηγυρικός).²⁵ The following passage may serve as an example.

In the section *Περὶ μεθόδου*, Joseph first gives a definition of μέθοδος, method: *The method is a figure of thought, that is to say the way of how it is brought in and its arrangement, for when, with an introduction, the thought is adduced, this also is a certain method.*²⁶ This, rather vague and general description is clarified and elaborated by means of a very concrete statement out of the imperial panegyric: *like, if I am to say that our king possesses the gentleness and benevolence of God, I do not say this immediately, but then how?*²⁷

Also to point out to the reader and rhetorician *in spe* that some rhetorical figures are to be avoided in any political speech, Joseph draws inspiration from the βασιλικὸς λόγος – e.g. as in the case of ψυχρολογία, nonsense, or *faultiness of speech*:²⁸ *It is also nonsense or worthlessness of speech, when someone compares the sublime to the base, when he happens to say to the king: you are acting honestly and you suitably connect to everything the appropriate value, just like a skilful shoemaker attaches coverings to the different feet. So stay away from the uselessness of such comparisons!*²⁹

A second proof of Joseph's creative ideas on rhetoric is his philosophical approach to this discipline. The passage in question states the following: *You too, at any rate, if you wish to be held in esteem, rather create in the right instances speeches of mixed style out of the rhetorical as well as the philosophical ἔννοιαι (subject matter, sentence). For if you practice oratory, you will give the impression of being a mean prose-writer, but if you*

²⁴ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 547, lines 1–3: Ἰκανῶς οὖν περὶ τοῦ δικανικοῦ καὶ συμβουλευτικοῦ διαλαβόντες λόγου λέγωμεν ἤδη καὶ περὶ τοῦ πανηγυρικοῦ εἶδους. Ἔστω γοῦν εἰς παράδειγμα λόγος βασιλικός.

²⁵ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 478, lines 6–8.

²⁶ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 537, lines 4–538, line 2: Ἡ μέθοδος σχῆμά ἐστι τῆς ἔννοιας, ἡγουν εἰσαγωγή ταύτης καὶ οἰκονομία, ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ μετὰ προκαταστάσεως εἰσάγεται ἡ ἔννοια, καὶ ἔστι τοῦτο μέθοδος τις.

²⁷ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 538, lines 2–16: ...οἷον μέλλων εἰπεῖν, ὅτι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πρᾶον καὶ φιλόανθρωπον ἔχει ὁ ἡμέτερος βασιλεὺς, οὐκ εὐθὺς τοῦτο λέγω, ἀλλὰ πῶς; ζητῶ παρὰ τίνι τῶν νῦν ἢ τῶν πώποτε τὸ πρᾶον εὖρω τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, τὸ συμπαθές, τὸ φιλόανθρωπον...

²⁸ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 540, line 2: Ἡ δὲ ψυχρολογία πλημμέλεια ἐστὶ λόγου.

²⁹ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 542, lines 8–14: Γίνεται ψυχρολογία καὶ ἀχρεϊότης λόγου καὶ ὅταν τὰ ὑψηλὰ ταπεινοῖς παραβάλλῃ τις, λέγων πρὸς βασιλέα τυχόν, οὕτω δικαιοπραγεῖς καὶ ἐφαρμόζεις ἐκάστω τὴν ἐπιτρεπὴ ἀξίαν, ὥς ἄρα καὶ ὁ δεξιὸς σκυτοτόμος τοῖς διαφόροις ποσὶ τὰς ἐπιβλύσεις προσέφυσσε· φεῦγε οὖν καὶ τῶν τοιούτων παραβολῶν τὸ ἀχρεῖον.

*philosophize more than reasonably, you are a most dry writer of unseasonable things. So a mixed style is to be praised.*³⁰

Here too, the βασιλικὸς λόγος gets special attention and therefore probably also an exemplary role. Joseph, indeed, clarifies his statement with a possible discussion of the emperor's virtue of σωφροσύνη, temperance: whereas an ordinary rhetorician would just praise the emperor for having this virtue, the 'philosopher-rhetorician' can enforce his laudation with a discussion, worthy of a true *natural philosopher*,³¹ on, for example, the nature of this specific virtue and of passions within the human body. In Joseph's case, to proclaim this rule was not just showing off by, so to say, an orator who thought much of himself as a self-declared intellectual. In his *Περὶ ἀρετῆς*, the ethical part of his *Synopsis Variarum Disciplinarum*,³² Joseph shows his sincere interest in this subject matter, giving a well-thought out description of the four cardinal virtues, some minor virtues (for example, ἐλευθεριότης, liberality) and their respective vices.³³

Of course, one should not pass over the fact that Joseph was not the only one, nor the first, to proclaim such an ideal of a 'philosopher-rhetorician' and 'mixed-style-orations'. Joseph himself refers to the oeuvre of some of his great predecessors as exemplary rhetorical texts, like *the writings of the great Gregorius the Theologian, Basil the Great, [Gregorius] of Nyssa, the works and letters of Psellus, Synesius, Themistius and Plutarchus*.³⁴ About two and a half centuries before Joseph, for example, Michael Psellus (1018 – after 1081), indeed, called for a synthesis of rhetoric and philosophy, attempting to *improve his stylistic eloquence through rhetoric and to purify his spirit through philosophy*.³⁵ Yet, on the other hand, whereas Psellus' appeal to such a synthesis sometimes gives the impression, as stated by George Kustas,³⁶ of being rather *self-conscious and almost obsessive* – as it were just to 'upgrade' his own rhetorical creations – one gets the impression that Joseph's statement is more sincere, meant for any orator-to-be – an opinion strengthened by his conviction that all branches of science and knowledge are intrinsically strongly intertwined.³⁷

³⁰ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 521, lines 2–7: σὺ γοῦν, εἰ θέλεις εὐδοκιμεῖν, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς ἄρτι καιροῖς μικτοὺς ἐργάζου λόγους ἔκ τε τῶν ῥητορικῶν ἐννοιῶν καὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων· εἰ γὰρ μόνον ῥητορεύεις, ταπεινὸς λογογράφος δόξεις, εἰ δὲ πλέον τοῦ εἰκότος φιλοσοφεῖς, ξηρότερος καὶ ἄκραια γράφων, ὥστε ἡ μίξις ἐπαινέτη.

³¹ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 520, lines 4–5: Φιλοσοφήσεις δὲ ἐν τοῦτοις καὶ φυσικεύσεις οὕτως.

³² Within the framework of my PhD, I prepared a first, critical edition and annotated English translation of this text. The former will be published in the *Series Graeca* of the *Corpus Christianorum*.

³³ Moreover – although this is just a supposition of mine, since, at this time, reading thoroughly Joseph's whole *encyclopedia* is not within my reach – it is reasonable to suppose that our philosopher-monk treated similar topics in other parts of his *Synopsis* as well. For example, the fourth part of it, indeed, deals with *the accomplishments, deeds, capabilities and sufferings* of both the soul and the human body (see *Στίχοι ἱαμβικοὶ περιέχοντες ἐν ἐπιτομῇ τὴν ἅπασαν ὑπόθεσιν καὶ τάξιν καὶ δύναμιν τῶν ἐγκειμένων τῇδε τῇ βίβλῳ εὐσυνόπτων μαθημάτων*, verses 54–68 (ed. Treu, "Philosoph Joseph", 39–42). From now on, I will refer to this text as Joseph Rhak., *Στίχοι*).

³⁴ Joseph Rhak., *Σύνοψις τῆς ῥητορικῆς*, ed. Walz, Vol. III, 521, lines 7–13.

³⁵ Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, VI, 36 (ed. É. Renauld, Michel Psellos. *Chronographie ou histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976–1077)* [Paris 1926–1928=1967]): ...περὶ δύο γὰρ ταῦτα ἐσπουδακῶς, ῥητορικοῖς μὲν λόγοις τὴν γλῶτταν πλάσασθαι πρὸς εὐπρέπειαν, καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ καθᾶραι τὸν νοῦν...

³⁶ Kustas, "Function and Evolution", 69.

³⁷ See E. Gielen, "Ad maiorem Dei gloriam."

Moreover, in his, previously mentioned, *Περὶ ἀρετῆς*, Joseph discusses the cardinal virtues as prerequisites for the complete life of the truly wise man. Since the structure of a βασιλικὸς λόγος should be based on a discussion of the emperor's virtues, which are the very same cardinal virtues as in Joseph's treatise, the very person of the emperor seems to possibly come rather close to this ideal of the wise man. Therefore, we could see this as a well-founded high-principled idea about the relation between rhetoric, philosophy (and more in particular, ethical philosophy), and imperial power.

Linked to this concept of a philosophically inspired imperial panegyric, there is yet another 'mixing type' of this rhetorical genre which we can associate with Joseph the Philosopher, i.e., the βασιλικὸς λόγος as *advice literature*. This term was borrowed from the scholar Dimiter Angelov, whose aim was to counter the one-sided view of *Byzantine court* litterati as individuals wont to excessive adulation of their rulers, and, instead, to present them – or, at least, some of them – as *lobbyists advocating public causes* within the frame of an epideictic speech.³⁸ As mentioned by the emperor-historian Iohannes VI Cantacuzenus (ca. 1295–1383), Joseph seems to have delivered at least one of such.

According to him, indeed, a rancorous Andronicus II had forbidden his grandson, the future emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus, to travel outside the Constantinople region. So, *to appease the emperor's anger* and also *to learn why he had become so hostile towards him*, the young Andronicus asked Joseph to act as his intermediary.³⁹ Joseph agreed, and *after having conveyed the message from the young Andronicus to the emperor...*, *he then also on his own, set forth numerous words of praise for the young emperor and rather mildly reproached the emperor for having dealt with the young man more harshly than was fitting.*⁴⁰

Both the fact that Joseph was asked by the emperor's grandson to accomplish such a rather delicate mission, and that he could reproach the very person of the emperor himself in public, are a clear indication of his special and high position at court and the respect shown for him and his wisdom. This is all confirmed by the various letters written to Joseph by other *protégés* of Andronicus II. The contents of them vary, from, for example, "help me to regain the emperor's favor" by Michael Gabras (ca. 1290 – after 1350),⁴¹ "write me back, so I can enjoy your great wisdom" by Nicephorus Gregoras (1290/1 or 1293/4 – between 1358–1361),⁴² to "as a matter of fact, I am writing you a letter, just so I

³⁸ Angelov, "Byzantine Imperial Panegyric as Advice Literature (1204–c.1350)", in Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (2003), 55–72 (55).

³⁹ Cantacuzenus, *Historiae*, I, 28, 4–10 (ed., trans. and comm. R. H. Trone, *The History of John Kantakouzenos (book 1). Text, Translation and Commentary* (Ann Arbor 1990): Ὅμως δ' ἑαυτὸν τῆς πολλῆς ἀθυμίας ἀναλαβὼν, ἔγνω δεῖν πρεσβεῖα χρήσασθαι τινι πρὸς τὸν πάππον καὶ βασιλέα, ἅμα μὲν καὶ τὴν ὀργὴν ἐκμειλιζόμενος τὴν ἐκείνου καὶ πρᾶότερον καταστήσων, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἐθέλων μαθεῖν, δι' ἣν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ βασιλεὺς οὕτως ἐκπεπολέμωτο. πέμπει δὴ τινα τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῇ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ γνωρίμων καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἀπάντων στόμασι κείμενον Ἰωσήφ...

⁴⁰ Cantacuzenus, *Historiae*, I, 30, 8–12: Ταῦτα διαπρεσβευσάμενος Ἰωσήφ ἐξ Ἀνδρονίκου βασιλέως πρὸς τὸν πάππον καὶ βασιλέα, εἶτα καὶ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ συγχούς τινας ἐγκωμίων λόγους τοῦ νέου βασιλέως διεξιελθόντος καὶ πρᾶως πῶς καταψαμένον τοῦ βασιλέως, ὥς τραχύτερον ἢ προσήκει προσφερομένου τῷ νέῳ, ἀντεμήνυσσε καὶ αὐτὸς τοιαῦτα.

⁴¹ See Treu, "Philosoph Joseph", 50–52. A somewhat similar letter was written by the monk Sophonias (PLP 26424). In one of his letters, he asks Joseph, *in the name of their old and deep friendship*, to accept a young man, called Iohannes, in his circle of friends, so he could enjoy his wisdom and protection. See S.G. Mercati, "Lettera del monaco Sofonia al filosofo Giuseppe", in *Collectanea Byzantina* 1 (Bari 1970), 343–347.

⁴² See, for example, *Nicephori Gregorae Epistulae*, 46, I. 48–58 (ed. P.A.M. Leone, *Nicephori Gregorae epistulae*, Vol. 2 [Matino 1982]): Ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ταῦτα λέγων εὖ λέγω, πλούτιζε τοῖς σοφοῖς σου λόγοις ἡμᾶς· τουτὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ σκοπός. Εἰ δ' οὖν, σύγγνωθι· τοῖς γὰρ ἀκουσίοις παταίσμασιν

can consider you, highly esteemed by all, as one of my friends, because of which I myself will be honored by others too” by Nicephorus Choumnus (between 1250-1255–1327).⁴³

Yet, just because of, but also in spite of his huge erudition, he was one of Andronicus’ ‘literary club’, and at the same time he was not. His inner convictions and way of life made him, so to say, a stranger in their midst.

An Outstanding Outsider

In the introduction to his *Synopsis*,⁴⁴ Joseph admires the man who lives his life according to reason, the θεωρητικός and at the same time *pities those who turn themselves up and down and are not able to rise completely out of difficulties nor to long and seek for the truly beautiful*⁴⁵ – which refers to people who have chosen the *life of enjoyment* or the *political life*.⁴⁶ Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that his ideal was not the life of a powerful patriarch – the office which he rejected four times⁴⁷ – but that of a wandering ascetic, focusing on God, contemplation and most supreme knowledge. This sets him miles away from his “colleagues” at court, often swollen with ambition. One of those was, to serve as an example, Theodorus Metochites. Ihor Ševčenko and Jeffrey Featherstone state that *Metochites was aware of the tension between the active life which provided him with wealth and power, and the vita contemplativa of a scholar and man of letters*, but that *he never brought himself to solve the dichotomy of his existence*.⁴⁸ Joseph, on the contrary, had already done this as a young man, leaving his home island and an offer for a great political career behind. At the end of his life, history repeated itself: *...he thought it necessary to flee the mob, that great city (i.e., Constantinople), the emperors, the palaces, the titles of father, high offices, and the invitations and company of the most prominent persons*.⁴⁹ He preferred instead to spend the last years of his life in a monastery in Thessaloniki.⁵⁰ Secondly, not only his way of life differed from the ‘mainstream courtier’, so did his ideas on learning and wisdom.

It is a commonplace to state that, throughout its history, Byzantine civilization almost permanently suffered from an inner struggle. On the one hand, Byzantium was a Christian empire, in which, related to its spiritual life, the emphasis was put on achieving already in

ἐκούσιον ἔπεσθαι τὴν συγγνώμην δίκαιον. Ὡς γὰρ εὖ ἔμοιγε λέγοντι ἐκόντι γίγνεται τοῦτο, οὕτως εἰ κακῶς ἄκοντι. Τῶν γὰρ ἐναντίων μιᾶς οὐσίας τῆς ἐπιστήμης, ὥς οἱ πάλαι σοφοὶ δογματίζουσιν, ἔπεται τῶν καλῶν ἐκούσιων γιγνομένων ἀκούσια νομίζεσθαι τὰ κακά. Ὡσπερ γὰρ καλὸς ἄκων οὐδεὶς, οὕτως οὐδ’ ἐκὼν κακὸς οὐδεὶς. Σὺ δὲ κρῖνε ταυτὶ καὶ διαίρει τῇ σῇ μεγαλονοίᾳ σοφώτερον καὶ μὴ λήγοις σωφρονίζων καὶ ῥυθμίζων καὶ θύραθεν τὰ ἡμέτερα. Σὺ γὰρ μοι καὶ σοφὸς ἀπλανὴς καὶ κριτὴς ἀρρεπὴς καὶ Μίνως ζῶν καὶ χρησμοδῶν Ἀπόλλων.

⁴³ See Treu, “Philosoph Joseph”, 49. The letters of Nicephorus Choumnus to Joseph have been published in *Anecdota Nova*. Descriptis et annotavit J. Fr. Boissonade (Paris 1844 [= Hildesheim 1962]), 68–69 and 214–222.

⁴⁴ Joseph Rhak., *Epitome*, ed. Treu, 34–35.

⁴⁵ Joseph Rhak., *Epitome*, ed. Treu, 35, lines 10–12: οἰκτεῖρει δὲ τοὺς ἄνω καὶ κάτω στρεφομένους καὶ μὴ δυναμένους ὅλως ἀνακύψαι τῶν δυσχερῶν καὶ τὸ ὄντως ποθῆσαι καὶ ζητῆσαι καλὸν...

⁴⁶ This ‘theory of three modes of living’ is based on Aristoteles, *EN*, 1095b, 16–19.

⁴⁷ Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu, 25, lines 21–27. See also Stiennon, “Joseph le philosophe”, 1389; J. Darrouzes, *Les registes des actes du patriarchat de Constantinople. Vol. I. Les actes des patriarches. Fasc. V. Les registes de 1310 à 1376*, Le patriarchat byzantin. Recherches de diplomatique, d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques (Paris 1977), number 2000, 2028, 2100.

⁴⁸ Ševčenko & Featherstone, *Two Poems* (1981), 3.

⁴⁹ Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu, 26, lines 24–26: ...φεύγειν ὥστε χρῆναι τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ τὴν μεγαλόπολιν ταύτην καὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ βασιλεία καὶ πατρότητας καὶ προεδρίας τε καὶ προκλήσεις καὶ ξυνουσίας τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχαῖς...

⁵⁰ Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu, 26, lines 33–38.

this life mystical union with God through contemplation and prayer. On the other hand, it had to deal with its huge, cultural heritage from antique, pagan Greece. The result was the antithesis of so-called *inner wisdom* or καθ' ἑμᾶς, *our wisdom* (i.e., Christian theology) and *outer wisdom* or θύραθεν/ἡ ἐξω σοφία (i.e., secular learning).⁵¹ This, so to say, schizophrenic crisis drew a sharp line through Byzantine society.

There were, indeed, those who completely rejected and loathed even the smallest hint of pagan learning. During the reign of Andronicus II, one of the most fervent adherents of this “purport” was the ascetic monk Athanasius, who, supported by the emperor, was twice elected as patriarch of Constantinople.⁵² Attributing all the socio-economical and political misfortunes the Empire was suffering (for example the continuous threat of Turkish invaders) to a general lack of moral standards and of sincere devotion to faith, he called on the religious to follow the Christian ideal of poverty, and the common people of Byzantium to charity and to godly, moral life. Lacking himself any kind of higher education, the patriarch really despised ‘worldly’ science and scholarship; no good or salvation could be found in Aristotle or scientific debates and the like, but only in God and the Scriptures. Therefore, he and his followers stood worlds apart from most of the people frequenting the imperial court in Constantinople, like Theodorus Metochites and Iohannes Zacharias Actuarius, great scholars, inflated with pride for their own comprehensive knowledge of ancient Greek sciences.

Another important group of ‘representatives’ of the *inner wisdom* were the hesychastic monks,⁵³ according to whom supreme wisdom and the divine truth could only be reached through mysticism and asceticism. However, as opposed to people like Athanasius, Palamas, the main representative of the so-called hesychastic movement, did not completely deny the value of pagan learning, yet, according to him, one should not indulge too much in it, since it did not bring you any closer to God.

Joseph the Philosopher, however, being at the same time a wandering monk and author of an *encyclopedia* combining secular and theological knowledge, represents a third position.⁵⁴ According to him, *ratio* and faith go hand in hand; one cannot stand without the other. Joseph’s one words make this clear: already through the study of, for example, the rhetorical art, natural phenomena and the human soul, *you will greatly honor the Creator of the world, after having seen the indescribable process of creation*.⁵⁵ Or, one will be

⁵¹ See, for example, L. Brehier, “L’enseignement classique et l’enseignement religieux à Byzance”, *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 21 (1941), 34–69 (59–63); J. Meyendorff, “Spiritual Trends in Byzantium in the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries”, in *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues*, 53–71; D.M. Nicol, “The Byzantine Church and Hellenic Learning in the Fourteenth Century”, *Studies in Church History* 5 (1969), 23–57; *idem*, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium, The Birkbeck lectures, 1977* (Cambridge-London-New York 1979), 31–65; G. Podskalsky, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz. Der Streit um die theologische Methodik in der spätbyzantinischen Geistesgeschichte (14./15. Jh.), seine systematischen Grundlagen und seine historische Entwicklung* (Byzantinisches Archiv 15, München 1977), 16–48; Runciman *Renaissance*, especially 27–35.

⁵² For patriarch Athanasius, see Meyendorff, “Spiritual Trends”, 59–62; J.L. Boojamra, *Church Reform in the Late Byzantine Empire. A Study for the Patriarchate of Athanasios of Constantinople* (Analekta Vlatadon 35, Thessaloniki 1983); A.M. Talbot, “Athanasios I”, *ODB*, 218–219; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 393–414.

⁵³ See especially Meyendorff, “Spiritual Trends”; *idem*, *Byzantine Hesychasm. Historical, Theological and Social Problems. Collected Studies* (London 1974); R.E. Sinkewicz, “Gregory Palamas”, in C.G. Conticello & V. Conticello (eds.), *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition (XIII^e–XIV^e s.)* (Corpus Christianorum 2, Turnhout 2002), 131–188 (with extensive bibliography on Palamism).

⁵⁴ This, I have expounded in more detail in “*Ad maiorem Dei Gloriam...*”.

⁵⁵ Joseph Rhak., Στίχοι, ed. Treu, 40, verses 63–64.

initiated into the mysteries of theology in *the silent state of your mind* (νοός).⁵⁶ At the same time, he dissociates himself from the ‘pro-Hellenic’ Byzantine intellectuals. Outer wisdom needs to be pursued, yet one should *not prefer the engagement in reason to virtue and your pursuit of it*.⁵⁷

Yet, probably just because of this particular *Weltanschauung*, his devotion to it and his great wisdom, he was highly esteemed by all. Andronicus II and his family members even awarded him the title of πατήρ⁵⁸ – an indication too that he was one of the key figures at court and its scholarly ‘club’. Iohannes Actuarius, who, being one of the greatest scientists and doctors in Byzantium, at Joseph’s instigation wrote a medical treatise,⁵⁹ while Thomas Magister, an eminent philologist, considered him as his spiritual father. Probably many of their contemporaries had the same feelings.

Nonetheless, to conclude, one may wonder, if Joseph really had played such a particular part, why, long since, in general overviews he is not discussed among the great Byzantine scholars, like his contemporaries Maximus Planudes (ca. 1255 – ca. 1305) and Nicephorus Gregoras, and why his work is so little known to us. As an extra argument, one could also refer to the words of Theodorus Metochites, one of Joseph’s greatest admirers, stating that Joseph *did not leave anything behind in written form nor any books*.⁶⁰ Whether, as stated by Paul Magdalino⁶¹, Metochites said so because he had not heard of the *Synopsis Variarum Disciplinarum* or whether this work was considered to lower Joseph’s great name, we cannot know. Yet one should also keep in mind the words of the *grand logothete*, following that curious statement, that Joseph *did not want to write something down each time, that he despised every form of applause in this life and the next, and that, just like Pythagoras and Socrates, he did not want to commit the treasures of his soul to paper*.⁶²

So, it seems that the greatest ‘value’ of Joseph at Andronicus’ court lay in his presence, concrete advice, and the lofty ideals he cherished and tried to realize. His *Synopsis* may have been a concession to his pupils and future generations instructing them how to achieve sublime wisdom.⁶³ For us, it is, together with several references to him by his contemporaries, our only proof of those thoughts and ideals. So, it is worth studying, considering that, perhaps, without him, some things during Andronicus’ reign and its revival of ancient Greek culture might have been different.

⁵⁶ Joseph Rhak., *Στίχοι*, ed. Treu, 42, verse 112.

⁵⁷ Joseph Rhak., *Epitome*, ed. Treu, 37, lines 2–4: Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς κατ’ αὐτὴν ἐπιμελείας τὴν τοῦ λόγου προθήσομεν, ἀλλ’ ἐκείνῃ τὰ πρῶτα τοῦτου φερέτω καὶ ταύτης ἄρα χάριν τὰ τῆς λογικῆς συστελλέσθω παιδεύσεως.

⁵⁸ Cf. supra, note 49. See also Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu (1899), 24, lines 21–22: Τοῖς μὲν οὖν καὶ πατρὸς ἀπεδίδοτο πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σπουδὴ καὶ τιμὴ...

⁵⁹ A. Hohlweg, “John Actuarius’ *De Methodo Medendi*. On the New Edition”, *DOP* 38 (1984), 121–133 (122–123).

⁶⁰ Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu, 9, lines 25–26: ...ὅτι μηδὲν ἐν ξυγγραφαῖς ἀνὴρ καὶ βιβλίους καταλελοίπει...

⁶¹ P. Magdalino, *L’orthodoxie des astrologues. La science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance (vii^e-xiv^e siècle)* (Réalités Byzantines 12, Paris 2006), 153.

⁶² Theodorus Metochites, *Πρὸς τινὰ φίλον*, ed. Treu, 9, lines 26–30: ...ἐπεὶ περ τῷ ζυντάττειν καθάπαξ ἀπέπατο, ἥκιστα πονεῖν ἐνταῦθα δοὺς ἑαυτόν, ἅτε πάσης θεατροκοπίας ὑπερφρονῶν κὰν τῷ βίῳ καὶ μεθύτερον χρόνῳ καὶ τὸν Πυθαγόρειον καὶ Σωκρατικὸν τρόπον μὴ πιστεύων γράμμασι καὶ βιβλίῳ τὸν οἶκον τῆς ψυχῆς πλοῦτον καὶ τοὺς θησαυροὺς.

⁶³ Joseph Rhak., *Epitome*, ed. Treu, 38, lines 23–28.

Robert Mihajlovski

The Medieval Town of Prilep

The Medieval settlement of Prilep (Прилеп), or Byzantine Prilapos (Πρίλαπος), was situated near the Roman site of Ceramiae.¹ In Macedonia, north of Thessalonica, the town of Prilep had a strategic position on the vital route of communication between the junctions of the *Via Egnatia* near Bitola and the road corridor of the Vardar river system at Stobi (Fig. 21). It was situated in the centre of a network of small roads and communications and guarded the passes of Mount Babuna and Pletvar controlling the gates to the Pelagonian valley and the *Via Egnatia*.² The fortress of Prilep was literally attached to the rocky hilltop, and “Prilep” in Slavonic means “stuck on the rock”.³ (Fig. 22). It was first mentioned by John Skylitzes in connection with the Tsar Samuel, who died there from apoplexy two days after hearing the news from the Battle of Kleidion near Strumitsa on 6 October 1014.⁴ After the definitive victory, Emperor Basil II reorganised Tsar Samuel’s realm and its former Patriarchate into an independent Archbishopric named after *Justiniana Prima*, based at Ohrid and encompassing the territory of the whole of conquered Bulgaria, without abolishing its autocephaly nor reducing its scope. In the first chrysobull, issued by the Emperor Basil II in 1019 the town of Prilep was mentioned as a part of the bishopric of Bitola (Pelagonia):

And the bishop of Bitola shall have Pelagonia, Prilep, Debreshte and Veles
with fifteen clerics and fifteen parishes.⁵

In Varosh, the “suburbia” of Prilep’s castle, a Cyrillic Church Slavonic inscription was found in the monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael, referring to Bishop Andrew in the year 996.⁶ The title of Bishop Andrew mentioned in the inscription is enigmatic and it may

¹ F. Papazoglou, *Les Villes de Macédoine à l’époque Romaine* (Athens-Paris 1988) 291; N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia* (Oxford 1972), vol. 1, 17, 67, maps 5, 9; I. Mikulčić, *Anticki gradovi vo Makedonija* (Skopje 1999), 86–89; *idem*, *Pelagonija u svetlosti arheoloskih nalaza, od egejske seobe do Avgusta* (Skopje-Beograd 1966), 75–87.

² Papazoglou, *Les Villes de Macédoine*, 291; I. Mikulčić, *Srednovekovni gradovi i tvrdini vo Makedonija* (Skopje 1996), 249–250.

³ A. Kazhdan, s.v. “Prilapos”, *ODB* 3.1718–1719; B. Babić, “Materijalnata kultura na makedonskite Sloveni”, in K. Bojadžievski (ed.), *Umetničkoto bogatstvo na Makedonija* (Skopje 1984), 121–125.

⁴ *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (CFHB 5, Berlin-New York 1973), 349; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge 2000), 71–74; *idem*, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer* (Cambridge 2003); F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250* (Cambridge 2006), 244–245; G. Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Jersey 1969), 275; V. Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale* (Paris 1989), 319.

⁵ Καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον Βουτέλεος εἰς τὴν Πελαγονίαν καὶ εἰς τὸν Πρίλαπον καὶ εἰς τὴν Δευρέτην καὶ εἰς τὸν Βελεσσὸν κληρικούς τε (15) καὶ παροίκους τε (15): I. Snegarov, *Istoriia na Ohridskata arhiepiskopiia, ot osnovavaniето i do zavladvaniето na Balkanskiia poluoostrov ot turcite* (Sofia 1924; repr. 1995), vol. 1, 55–56; H. Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida, Geschichte und Urkunden* (Leipzig 1902; repr. 1980), 30.

⁶ I. Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedoniia* (Sofia 1931; repr. 1970), 26–28. The rare Slavonic epigraphic document can be read as, “In the year 996 Bishop Andrew departed this life, 17 February”.

be that he was bishop of Bitola or the Choroepiskopos of Prilep who was under the bishop's jurisdiction.

The valley of Pelagonia with its towns of Bitola and Prilep was involved in the insurrections of Peter Delyan in 1041 and George Voytekh in 1072.⁷ In 1041, when the Byzantine Emperor Michael IV was suppressing Delyan's revolt, the local military commander Manuel Ivatz tried to stop the Byzantine army at the Pass of Pletvar, northwest of Prilep, but without success.⁸ The Byzantine administration engaged in military intervention in order to pacify the province. The nearby military camp of Pelagonia near Bitola served as the imperial base for the emperors Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) and Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180). Between 1198 and 1204 the importance of Prilep increased and the valley of Pelagonia was assigned under a "*Partitio Terrarum Imperii Romaniae*" as *Provincia Prilapi et Pelagoniae cum Stano*, but there are no indications of the Latin Crusaders' occupation.⁹ In the decisive battle at Pelagonia in 1211, however, the region was taken from the local ruler, Strez the Sebastokrator by the alliance of Michael I Komnenos Doukas of Epiros and Henry I, the Latin emperor.¹⁰ Starting from 1215 this territory changed masters: it was taken by the Despotate of Epiros under Theodore Doukas, then it was retaken and included in the Bulgarian Empire of Tsar John Asen II in 1230 who replaced the Byzantine administration and clergy with his own officers.¹¹ In the period between 1246 and 1259, the area of Pelagonia/Bitola and Prilep rapidly changed hands between the Despotate of Epiros and the Nicaean Empire. In 1246 Prilep was retaken by the Despotate of Epiros under John Doukas, then in 1252–1253 by the Nicaean Empire and again by the Epirotes under Michael II in 1257–1258.

According to George Acropolites, Prilep was a strategic fortress, (φοῦρτιον) on the border with the Serbian kingdom in the north.¹² The seat of the Pelagonian diocese was temporarily transferred to Prilep in the twelfth and again in the fourteenth century because of its strategic position in the region – as mentioned above, the city's location intersected a number of important roads and served to guard the Pelagonian valley from nearby mountains. The upper fortress of Prilep was virtually an acropolis and according to the historian Acropolites writing in 1258, it could easily be defended by only forty soldiers.¹³

In 1259, a battle took place in the southern region of the Pelagonian valley between the forces of the Empire of Nicaea and a triple alliance led by Michael II Komnenos Doukas of

⁷ Lj. Mandić & R. Mihajlovski, "XIth century Byzantine Seal from Heraclea, near Bitola", *Byzantion* 58 (2000), 273–277.

⁸ Kazhdan, "Prilapos", 1718; Scylitzes, 414.45–47.

⁹ P. Magdalino, *Between Romaniae: Thessaly and Epirus in the Later Middle Ages, Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London 1989), 104–105.

¹⁰ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. A. Meineke (CSHB, Bonn 1835), 643–672, 707–708; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 312; K. Adžievski, *Pelagonija vo sredniot vek, od doagjanjeto na Slovenite do pagjanjeto pod turska vlast* (Skopje 1994), 126–132.

¹¹ M. Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans, a Study in the Spread of Byzantine Culture among the Slavs* (Chicago 1933), 110–112; Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 126–132; N. Ovčarov, *Istoriia i arheologija na Vardarska Makedonia prez XIV v.* (Sofia 1996), 104.

¹² G. Acropolitae, *Annales Byzantini* (PG 140, Paris 1887), 1048; Lj. Doklešić, *Kroz historiju Makedonije* (Zagreb 1964), 44; A. Ducellier, *La façade Maritime de l'Albanie au Moyen Âge, Durazzo et Valona du XIe au XVe siècle* (Thessaloniki 1981), 174–175.

¹³ Acropolitae, *Annales Byzantini*, 1048; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 320; A. Deroko, *Markovi kuli-Prilep, Starinar* n.s. 5–6 (1954–5), 83–104; Ovčarov, *Istoriia i arheologija na Vardarska Makedonia prez XIV v.*, 107–109; Mikulčić, *Srednovekovni gradovi i tvrđini vo Makedonija* (Skopje 1996), 252. The small fortress was built between the 11th and 13th centuries; the large fortress (300 x 150m) was built at the end of the thirteenth century or at the beginning of the fourteenth. The castle-acropolis on the hilltop "Chardak" had dimensions of 150 x 120 m.

Epiros, which highlighted the importance of the Prilep fortress.¹⁴ In 1321, Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos appointed a governor, the Protostrator Theodore Synadenos, and held Prilep until 1330.¹⁵ In 1334, the Serbs under Tsar Dushan (1331–1355) occupied territories within Okhrid, Prilep, Bitola and Chlerenon,¹⁶ but after Dushan's death, Prilep became the capital of Vukashin's kingdom (1366–1371) and that of his son Marko (1371–1395).¹⁷

During Ottoman times, the fortress was still in use. In 1661, the Ottoman traveller Evliya Celebi in his travel book *Seyahatname* mentioned that on the hill above Prilep on a precipitous cliff stood a hexagonal stone castle with solid towers. Visiting the fortress, he found only three houses and a garrison commander stationed there.¹⁸ The modern town of Prilep, located two kilometres further down on the plain, was an Ottoman creation established after 1385.¹⁹

The medieval suburb of Varosh was an active church centre with numerous places of worship. They were erected or renewed during the fourteenth century and most of the church buildings are treasure houses of mural painting and architecture. Notable structures include the monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael from the tenth century, the church of St Nicholas of the thirteenth century, the church dedicated to St Demetrios, the church of St Peter, and the small church of the Most Pure Virgin.²⁰ The churches were evenly spread through the settlement of Varosh, the centre of commercial and religious activity. A more detailed description of each of them follows.

The monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael was erected sometime in the tenth century, reconstructed in the twelfth, and then again in the thirteenth by John, the Chartoularios of the West. It possessed a domed church with a single nave and a semicircular apse at the east. The interior was painted in the twelfth century and then repainted in the fifteenth. One of the founders was the monk John, whose portrait was painted on the western side of the interior. At the entrance two figures of King Vukashin and his son Marko were painted in the former narthex. A marble column with a Cyrillic inscription of Bishop Andrew, dated to 993, was found in the western narthex. On the western and eastern side the church is flanked by monastic buildings and monumental

¹⁴ R. Mihajlovski, "The Battle of Pelagonia, 1259: a New Look at the March Routes and Topography", *BS* 64 (2006), 275–284.

¹⁵ Kazhdan, "Prilapos", 1718–1719.

¹⁶ Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 49–55; E. Maneva, *Srednovekoven nakit od Makedonija*, Skopje 1992, 186–187; Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 184, including the key military fortifications of Zheleznik, Chebren, Buchin, Debreshta and Prosek. Under Dushan's rule the fortress of Prilep was an important residence of a military Kastrophylax.

¹⁷ K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba* vol. 1 (Beograd 1952), 247–274; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 319–322.

¹⁸ E. Čelebija, *Putopis*, transl. G. Elezović, vol. 2 (Sarajevo 1957), 60–61; I. Emin, *Evlija Čelebija za Makedonija* (Skopje 2007), 23–24; A. E. Vacalopoulos, *History of Macedonia 1354–1833* (Thessaloniki 1973), 222; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 323–330; Mikulčić, *Srednovekovni gradovi i tvrđini vo Makedonija*, 252, with maps at 250–251; T. Polak, *Markovi kuli-Prilep, Konservatorski badan* (Warszawa 1984), 1–89, with map; B. Babić, *Materijalnata kultura na Makedonskite sloveni vo svetlinata na arheoloskite istrazuvanja vo Prilep*, *Prilog za istorijata na kulturata na makedonskiot narod* (Prilep 1986), 1–362.

¹⁹ M. Kiel, "Perlepe", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 8 (Leiden 1995), 310–313.

²⁰ Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 320–322; B. Babić, *Kulturno bogatstvo Prilepa, VI–XVII vek* (Kruševac 1975), 9–21; *idem*, *Kulturno bogatstvo Prilepa/Kulturnoto bogatstvo na Prilep od V–XIX vek* (Beograd-Prilep 1976).

painted gates. Local merchants in Prilep renovated the church with the whole complex rebuilt in 1861 and has recently been restored.²¹

The Church of St Nicholas is located in the centre of Medieval Varosh. It is a single nave church richly decorated with bricks and ancient marble fragments reused as spolia (Fig. 23). It was erected at the end of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century. Its founders were Vega, Kapse and Maria during the rule of the Byzantine emperors Andronikos II, Michael IX and the empress Irene in 1298. The wall decorations in the interior are well preserved in three registers. The first bands have figures of saints, the second show a Cycle of the Passion and the third the Great Feasts. The high artistic quality of the wall paintings belongs to the late Komnenian period, and they are related to the iconographic traditions of St George of Kurbinovo and St Nikola at Manastir in Mariovo, as well as to the churches of the Anargyroi, St Taxiarches and St Stephen in Kastoria. Some of the most remarkable compositions are "The Last Supper", and the scene in the apse.²²

The Church of St Demetrios, the Great Martyr, is one of the main churches in Varosh situated at the medieval fairground called "Panagyurishte". According to N. Mavrodinov, the oldest part of the church was probably constructed in the tenth century during Tsar Samuel's time.²³ The rest, probably begun in the second half of the twelfth century, was erected in six building phases between the twelfth and the fourteenth century. The church is crowned by a dome with a twelve-sided drum and adorned with rich ceramic decorations. It has unusual eastern apsidal decorations: the southern apse is polygonal and richly decorated, while the central and northern apses are plain and semicircular (Fig. 24). Church architecture in Thessaly and Epiros influenced the architecture and façade decorations. A local family of Mosynopolites sponsored the painted decoration of the interior in 1284, with some parts of the interior repainted in the fourteenth century, when Tsar Dushan donated it to the monastery of Treskavets.²⁴

²¹ B. Babić, "Nova saznanja o crkvama srednjevekovnog Prilepa", *Zbornik Svetozara Radojčica* (Beograd 1969), 11–15; D. Čornakov, "Konzervatorsko-istraživački radovi na arhitekturi i zivopisu crkve Sv. Arhangela kod Prilepa", *Zbornik zavoda za zastitu culture* 18 (1967), 93–98; *idem*, "Manastir Sv Arhangel–s. Varos", *Spomenici na kulturata na Makedonija* (1980), 174–178; P. Miljković-Peppek, "Crkovna arhitektura, zivopisot i prilepskite zoografi", *Prilep i prilepsko niz istorijata* (Prilep 1971), 94, 97–98; Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedoniia*, 552; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 320.

²² F. Mesesnel, "Crkva Sv. Nikole u Markovoj Varoši kod Prilepa", *Glasnik skopskog naucnog drustva* 19 (1938), 37–52; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 220; T. Velmans, *La Peinture murale Byzantine à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris 1977), 236; B. Babić, "Tri grcka fresko natpisa na zidinama crkava srednjevekovnog Prilepa iz druge polovine XIII veka", *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* (1969), 25–33; PMiljković-Peppek, "Crkovna arhitektura, zivopisot i prilepskite zoografi", 95 & 102; R. Findrik, "Konzervatorski radovi na arhitekturi crkve sv. Nikole u selu Varosi kod Prilepa", *Zbornik zavoda za zastitu spomenika culture* 16 (1965), 200–218; A. Nikolovski, "Crkvata sv. Nikola–s. Varoš", *Spomenici na kulturata na Makedonija* (Skopje 1980), 167–174.

²³ N. Mavrodinov, *Starobulgarsko iskustvo, XI–XIII vjak* (Sofia 1959), 264; R. Mihajlovski, "Molyvdovull of Nikephoros Protosynkellos", *BSI* 69 (2010), 221–230.

²⁴ K. Balabanov, "Crkvata sv. Dimitrij, s. Varoš, Prilepsko", *Spomenici na kulturata na Makedonija* (Skopje 1980), 178; V. Ristić, "Crkva svetog Dimitrija u Prilepu", *Sinteza* 10 (1979), 171–226; Miljković-Peppek, "Crkovna arhitektura, zivopisot i prilepskite zoografi", 94; G. Millet, *L'École grécque dans l'architecture byzantine* (London 1974), 15–39, 253–289; B. Babić, "Opst pregled na spomeniciteod minatoto na Prilep i prilepskiot kraj", *Spomenici za srednovekovnata i ponovata istorijana Makedonija*, vol. 4 (Skopje 1981), 19–35; C. Stewart, *Serbian Legacy* (London 1959), 62, 120. A famous annual fair (*panegyris*) was held every 30 April and lasted for 25 days. In the reign of Tsar Dushan the privileges of the *panegyris* were renewed, and a metochion in Prizren with a metochion of the Monastery St Demetrios at Prilep were donated to the Monastery of Treskavets; A.

Recently an eleventh-century Byzantine lead seal mentioning Nikephoros Protosynkellos was found near the building indicating its ecclesiastical importance (Fig. 25). The seal was preserved in extremely good condition; its dimensions are 20 mm. x 18 mm, and it weighs 4.7 gr. The obverse shows a bust of the Mother of God Orans, facing, holding a medallion of the Christ Child on her breast, between the sigla $\overline{\text{MP}}$ and $\overline{\text{ΘY}}$. On the reverse is an engraved inscription in four lines containing a twelve-syllable verse:

+ ΝΙΚΙΦ.Ρ.Υ | ΣΦΡΑΓ..ΜΑ | Ατ ΣΙ.ΚΕ | Λ ..Υ

It can be read as: + Νικιφόρου σφράγισμα πρωτοσυγκέλλου

A free translation of the metric text would be: “The seal of Nikephoros Protosynkellos.”²⁵ The lead seal of Nikephoros Protosynkellos is a rare sphragistic document, dating from the last quarter of the eleventh century. The owner of this seal was a high-ranking ecclesiastical prelate.

Another Varosh church, located on the eastern side of the main road, is dedicated to **Saint Peter**. It is a single-nave building, with facades and the apse exterior decorated with brickwork, in a technique similar to the church of St. Nicholas nearby. The building with its partly preserved fresco decoration belongs to the last decades of the fourteenth century.²⁶ (Fig. 26).

Another small church of significance is that of the **Most Pure Virgin**, built approximately in 1420. According to the extant inscription it was rebuilt and repainted in the Ottoman period through the donations of Paul and Radoslav, the sons of Theodore and Dobra. The fresco decoration has been damaged through the centuries but can be attributed to the workshop of Makariya Zograph.²⁷

In Varosh, there are some remnants of old church buildings such as the church of **St Theodore Tyron**, the church of **Sveta Petka**, the church of **St George**, the church of **St Athanasios**, the church of **Sts Kosmas and Damian**, the chapel of **St Barbara**, and the church dedicated to **St John the Forerunner**, which served as the Metropolitan chapel in the period between the middle of the fourteenth century and last quarter of the fifteenth century. Most of these churches are no longer standing, but their sites have been excavated.²⁸

Soloviev, *Odbrani spomenici srpskog prava (od kraja XII do kraja XV veka)* (Beograd 1926), 611; S. Vryonis Jr., “The Panegyris of the Byzantine Saint: a Study in the Nature of the Medieval Institution, its Origin and Fate”, in S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint, 14th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Birmingham 1981), 196–227; N. Ovčarov, *Istorija i arheologija na Vardarska Makedonija prez XIV v.* (Sofia 1996), 107–115; Babić, “Opst pregled na spomenicite od minatoto na Prilep i prilepskiot kraj”, 32–34; *idem*, “Pokušaj utvrdjivanja mesta i granica Panagirišta Prilepa druge četvrtine XIV veka”, *Starinar* 20 (1969), 1–10; Snegarov, *Istorija na Ohridskata arhiepiskopiia, ot osnovavaniето i do zavladvaniето na Balkanskiia poluostrov ot turcite*, vol. 2, 439–446.

²⁵ Mihajlovski, “Molyvdovull of Nikephoros Protosynkellos”, 224; *idem*, “Molyvdovull of Nikephoros Protosynkellos”, *Australian Research Council, Network of Early European Research*, University of Western Australia, 3–8 July, 2007.

²⁶ Nikolovski, “Crkvata sv. Nikola–s.Varoš”, 179–180; Miljković-Peppek, “Crkovna arhitektura, zivopisot i prilepskite zoografi”, 96.

²⁷ G. Subotić, *Ohridskata slikarska skola od XV vek* (Ohrid 1980), 48–51; Mesesnel, “Crkva Sv. Nikole u Markovoj Varoši kod Prilepa”, 37–52.

²⁸ Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 220; Babić, “Opst pregled na spomeniciteod minatoto na Prilep i prilepskiot kraj”, 33; *idem*, “Nova saznanja o crkvama srednjvekovnog Prilepa”, 11–14; Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 199, 266.

In the area of Prilep, two famous medieval imperial monasteries have been preserved. **The Dormition of the Holy Mother of God at Treskavets** lies north of Prilep under the summit of Zlatovrv (1260m). In antiquity it was known as Kolobaisa and its sanctuary was dedicated to the Thracian cults of Apollo Otedaunikos ("Thunder-God") and Artemis/Bendis. The Byzantine Emperors Andronikos III and Michael IX renovated it prior to 1230. The monastery was granted donations and a golden chrysobull by the Bulgarian Tsar John Asen II and his son Kaloman, and by the Serbian rulers Milutin and Stefan Dechanski. Tsar Dushan confirmed its properties around Prilep, Babuna, Porechie, Hlerin and Prespa in 1334 with a golden chrysobull. The large monastery is a Laura type complex, with a remarkable central church, and a refectory dated to the fourteenth century. The central church, built in stages between 1334 and 1570, has a single nave with a dome and a triangular apse at the east. There is another chapel on the western side, painted in the fourteenth century. From the same period a narthex flanked by two towers was erected on the western side (Fig. 27). The fresco decoration spans several periods, starting in c. 1350, with a portrait of the donor Gradislav, followed by a Liturgical Calendar in the narthex from the first half of the fourteenth century. The portraits of the donors on the façade are from 1360, but the main fresco paintings, which are of high quality, date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²⁹

Further afield, **the Monastery of the Transfiguration at Zrze** is situated twenty-five kilometres northeast of Prilep. It was a hermitage comprising ascetic cells and a few churches. The main church of the Transfiguration is again a single nave building, with a semicircular apse on the eastern side. The painter, known as Dimitrios or Dragoslav decorated its interior with frescoes in 1369. The iconographical program contains rare Old Testament scenes and compositions from the Passion of Christ. In the period between 1393 and 1394, John the Metropolitan and Makariya Zograph the hieromonk painted the iconostasis.

As part of the Pelagonian Diocese, mediaeval Prilep reached one of its most brilliant intellectual and artistic periods in the fourteenth century. Not only was the diocese a centre of monasticism and Orthodoxy in the northern parts of the Pelagonian valley, especially in the period of the anti-Bogomil campaigns, but in the Babuna Mountain (northeast of Prilep) lay the Bogomil villages of Bogomila and Melnitsa.³⁰ Such differences resulted in active participation in issues of doctrine. Circa 1330, a native from the region of Prilep, Gregory Akindynos, became a key figure in the controversy over Hesychasm and Palamism.³¹ By

²⁹ Papazoglou, *Les Villes de Macédoine*, 291; A. Fol and I. Marazov, *Thrace and the Thracians* (London-Auckland 1977), 21–34; Z. Rasolkoska-Nikolovska, "Freski od kalendarot vo manastiriot Treskavec-Prilep", *Kulturno nasledstvo* 2 (1962), 45–60; Velmans, *La Peinture murale Byzantine à la fin du Moyen Age*, 242; Babić, "Opst pregled na spomenicite od minatoto na Prilep i prilepskiot kraj", 37–52; Millet, *L'École grécque dans l'architecture byzantine*, 12; M. Maksimović-Gligorijević, "Slikani kalendar u Treskavcu i stihovi Hristofora Mitilenskog", *Zograf* 8 (1977) 48; Čornakov, "Konzervatorsko-istrazivacki radovi na arhitekturi i zivopisu crkve Sv. Arhangela kod Prilepa", 183–186; Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale*, 342–343; Snegarov, *Istoriia na Ohridskata arhiepiskopiia, ot osnovavaniето i do zavladvaniето na Balkanskiia poluostrvot ot turcite*, vol. 2, 439–443; G. Traichev, *Manastirite vo Makedoniia* (Sofia 1933), 148.

³⁰ V. Nersessian, *The Tondrakian Movement: Religious Movements in the Armenian Church from the Fourth to the Tenth Centuries* (London 1987); D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils, a Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Twickenham 1948), 162–167; I. Klincharov, *Pop Bogomil i negovoto vreme* (Sofia 1927), 32; D. Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto v Bulgaria* (Sofia 1969), 150.

³¹ A.C. Hero, *Letters of Gregory Akindynos* (Washington 1983), X, n. 6; A.M. Talbot & A.C. Hero, s.v. "Akindynos Gregory", *ODB* 1.45–46; R. Mihajlovski, "A Sermon about the Anti-Palamite

1337, Akindynos was in Constantinople and played a mediating role between Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Palamas. Probably in 1341, he was challenging the orthodoxy of Palamas' doctrine and supporting Barlaam, for which he was excommunicated at the Council of Constantinople in 1347 and died in exile.

After 1366, with the disintegration of Dushan's empire, the Archbishopric of Ohrid was divided between the kingdom of Vukashin, the Despotate of Hlapen, the Empire of Symeon in Epiros, the Principdom of Elbasan and the Despotate of Velbuzhd.³² From 1366 onwards, the Bishopric of Pelagonia experienced turbulent times, a situation that would last to the end of the fifteenth century, but the Pelagonian church seems to have weathered the prevailing political changes and to have accepted patronage from the new self-proclaimed king Vukashin. He needed the religious support of the local clergy and, as a result, the Bishop of Pelagonia was promoted into the higher ecclesiastical rank of Metropolitan. It seems that after 1346 King Vukashin temporarily relocated the Pelagonian See to Prilep, giving the position the title *Metropolitan of Prilep and Pelagonia*. Thus, the bishop exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the whole region.³³ A church *Menologion* from the second half of the fourteenth century was found in Skopje confirming this primacy, on which a note from King Marko to the Metropolitan of Pelagonia has been preserved.³⁴

Another important church document from 1382 known as the *Codex of Athens*, preserved in the National Library of Athens, records that in the second half of the fourteenth century the diocese of Pelagonia or Bitola was separated from the diocese of Prespa and Prilep.³⁵ On the ecclesiastical level, the newly-established Metropolitanate of Prilep produced a few distinguished prelates and became a local centre of ecclesiastical culture. The most important among the archbishops of Prilep were the well-known icon painter Metropolitan John, and his brother, hieromonk and painter, Makariya Zograph.

Lastly, in the church of the Transfiguration at Zrze, Makariya Zograf, after his brother's death, continued to paint the icons for the iconostasis. In 1421/2 he painted the Holy Virgin Pelagonitissa, a masterpiece of Palaiologan iconography, but reflecting the eleventh-century Komnenian iconographic type of this highly venerated icon in the area of the Pelagonian valley. He remodelled the iconographic type giving it a fresh Palaiologan appearance by neglecting volume and focusing attention on the decoration of the garments.³⁶

In 1395, Prince Marko as Ottoman vassal died at the Battle of Rovine and finally Sultan Bayezid I took over his kingdom. A Cyrillic inscription written by Makariya from the church of the Transfiguration in Zrze refers to the dramatic events after 1395:

Theologian Gregorius Akyndinos from Prilep", *Nis i Vizantija, Sixth Symposium, Nis, June 3–5, 2007* (2008), 119–125.

³² D.M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267–1479* (Cambridge 1984), 123–138.

³³ M. Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije srpske crkve u srednjem veku* (Beograd 1985), 99–100; Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 267; Mihajlovski, 9.

³⁴ Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 264. Unfortunately, the *Menologion* was destroyed when the National Library in Belgrade went up in flames during the German bombardment on 6 April 1941.

³⁵ Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida, Geschichte und Urkunden*, 20; Adžievski, *Pelagonija*, 262–266; Snegarov, *Istorija na Ohridskata arhiepiskopiia, ot osnovavaniето i do zavladvaniето na Balkanskiia poluoostrov ot turcite*, vol. 1, 331–339. The *Codex of Athens* contains the List of Dioceses in the Archbishopric of Ohrid, which were as follows: Castoria, Moglena, Vodena and Slanitsa, Strumitsa, Malesh (Moluscu), Veles, Pelagonia or Bitola, Kichevo, Nunte, Elbassan, Berat (Belgrade), Kanina and Avlona, Devol and Goritsa (Selasforos and Korça), Gora Mokra, Prespa and Prilep.

³⁶ R. Mihajlovski, "The Cult of the Mother of God (Pelagonitissa) in the Bitola region", *BSI* 62:1 (2004), 271–288.

...After the reign of the honorable Christian rulers, Tsar Stephen and his son Tsar Urosh had passed, King Vukashin and his son, King Marko, took the rule over these lands. In their days those who ruled over this holy place, their fatherland, were the holy devoted metropolitan lord John Zograph and his brother, the monk Makariya Zograph, grandchildren of the holy donor, brother Germanos.

After the departure of these masters the great Emir Bayezid took control, and this holy place began to be abandoned.³⁷

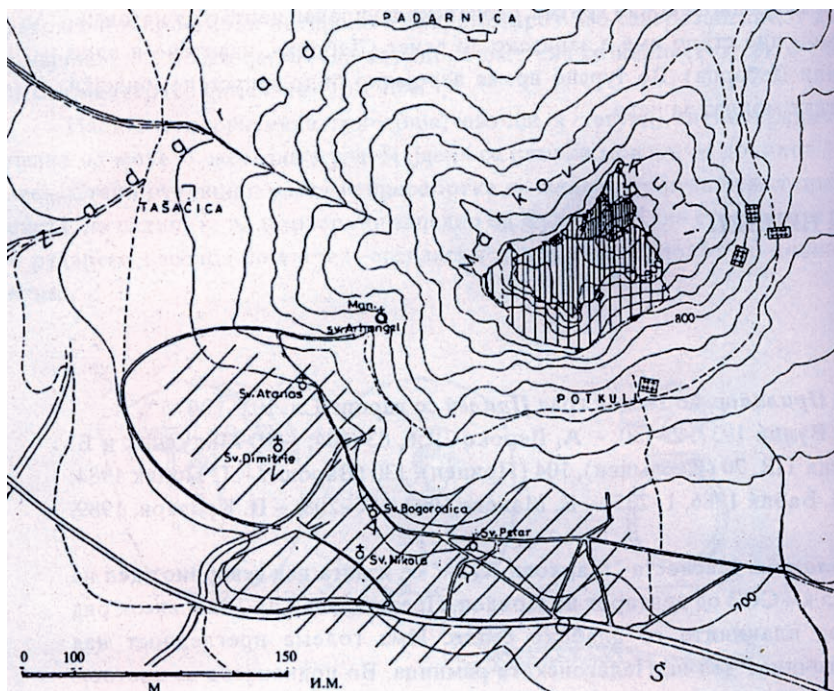


Figure 21: Map of medieval Prilep with Varosh.

³⁷ Z. Rasolkoska-Nikolovska, "Manastir Zrze so crkvite Preobrazenie i Sveti Nikola", *Spomenici za srednovekovnata i ponovata istorija na Makedonija* 4 (1981), 439, t. 5; Subotić, *Ohridskata slikarska skola od XV vek*, 44–45, t. 20; Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State*, 489; Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi* (Sremski Karlovci 1926), 63.

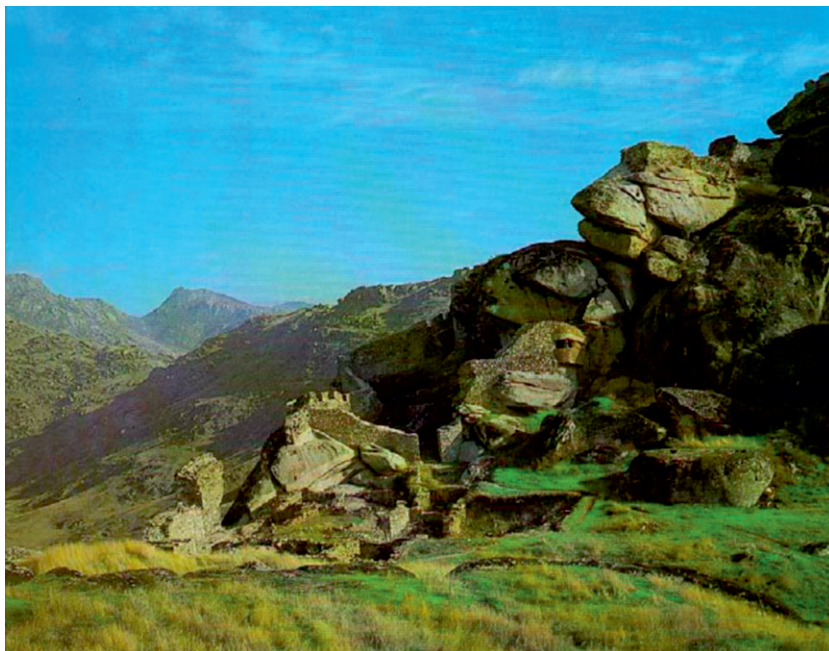


Figure 22: The fortress of Prilep



Figure 23: Facades of the church Saint Nicholas in Varosh, 1299.



Figure 24: The church of Saint Demetrios, tenth to fourteenth centuries.



Figure 25: The lead seal of Nikephoros Protosynkellos, 11th century.



Figure 26: The church of Saint Peter in Varosh.



Figure 27: The monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God at Treskavets.



Figure 28: The Icon of Pelagonitissa, with a detail of the signature of Makarios Zograph.

Nigel Westbrook

The Freshfield Folio view of the Hippodrome in Istanbul and the Church of St. John Diippion

Abstract

The so-called “Freshfield Folio” view of the Hippodrome in Istanbul is a rare sixteenth century drawing, apparently based on direct observation, of Byzantine buildings in Constantinople/Istanbul. It depicts the Hippodrome, its monuments, including the serpent column and two obelisks, and the church of Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya). This paper will focus on a large unidentified structure to the left of the great church, the identity of which has given rise to various interpretations. It has been previously assumed that the drawing is of limited value as a topographical document because of several factors, notably that the well-known obelisks have been placed incorrectly in relation to the other buildings. It will be proposed that the view is not a single, framed representation, but rather constitutes several studies, made over a duration on the same two-dimensional surface. It is furthermore conditioned by the subjective perception of its author, an artist who could hardly be stated to be in control of his view, or to have necessarily understood what he was drawing. Through an analysis of the overlapping viewing cones, the artist’s viewing position will be determined, and the unknown building scaled and spatially located. It is the hypothesis of this paper that the view can be used with certain constraints to reconstruct both the topography and the architectural character and identity of this vanished building, which will be tentatively identified as the church of St. John Diippion. This identification, if secure, will contribute to reconstruction of the topography of the other adjoining monuments in Constantinople, such as the *Carceres* of the Hippodrome, the Baths of Zeuxippus, and the Great Palace.

The Freshfield Drawing of the Hippodrome and Hagia Sophia and the Church of St. John Diippion

Despite the information contained in the Book of Ceremonies (*De Ceremoniis*) on the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors in Constantinople, any reconstruction of its topography is largely dependent on direct eye-witness accounts, of which there are very few, and the limited number of archaeological surveys that have been carried out in the last century.

For eye-witness accounts, we are dependent on a few observers, primarily from the sixteenth century, and several earlier accounts, notably the Ekphrasis on Justinian’s buildings by Procopius,¹ although this sixth century writer did not supply any information on the Great Palace other than an ekphrastic description of the Chalke Gate, and the adjacent buildings of the Senate, Justinian’s column and equestrian statue in the court to the south of Hagia Sophia, and the great church itself. There are, in addition, also passing mentions in Byzantine-period texts by authors who could have seen the complex in use,

¹ Procopius, *Aed.* I.1: Hagia Sophia, 3–33; I.2: Augusteion, column of Justinian, St. Eirene, 33–39; I.10: Augusteion, Senate house, Chalke gate, 81–87; I.11: Imperial portico and cistern, 91–93; see *The Buildings of Procopius*, trans. H.B. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass. 1940).

such as Malalas and Psellus, and even a few by authors who actually lived there, or used its structures, notably Anna Comnena.²

Modern scholarship begins with Pierre Gilles, who studied the city's topography between 1544 and 1550 without finding anything of great significance on the Palace. His importance is his contribution to the topography of the *Augusteion* and Senate building. The anonymous artist accompanying the German Imperial ambassador, David Ungnad von Zonneck, during his presence in Istanbul between 1574 and 1578 has, on the other hand, provided us with what is potentially a plausible series of representations of both the urban monuments and the vicinity of the Palace.³ The drawing of the Hippodrome by this artist will be examined below in order to determine the location and identity of the building structure shown to adjoin both Hagia Sophia and the Hippodrome. The remarkable urban panorama by Lorichs, or Lorck, of 1559 does not represent the Palace, but nevertheless depicts several buildings adjacent to it, such as Hagia Sophia, St. Irene and other churches (Fig. 30). An artist made a view of Hagia Sophia for Sir Richard Worsley in 1786 which depicted a then-extant Byzantine church, the Chapel of Our Lord or Church of Christ Chalkitês (then known as *Arslanhane*), attached to or built onto the Chalke Gate, which enabled Cyril Mango to determine its position in plan, and therefore the approximate location of the Chalke Gate, by cross-referring it with the panorama of Istanbul by Cornelius Loos (1710).⁴ Additionally, there are the excellent drawings made by Curtis, between about 1870 and 1891, and published in two fascicles as *Broken Bits of Byzantium*. They depict extant parts of the Boukoleon Palace, to the south, but reveal little of the palace other than the structure referred to by Mamboury and Wiegand as the "Ramp-House" in area B.⁵

Finally, a note should be made regarding the archaeological studies, of which the major ones were the British Academy excavation directed by Casson of 1927–1928, the German Archaeological Institute survey directed by Mamboury and Wiegand, of about 1912–1918 (published in 1934) and the two St. Andrews excavations of 1935–1938 (under Brett) and 1952–1954 (under Talbot Rice).⁶ The earlier excavations suffered from a lack of stratigraphical methods. There was also no systematic account of how the excavations were carried out. Therefore, the published accounts are somewhat inadequate descriptions of what was found. It will be necessary to supplement these with the unpublished notes, particularly those of Mamboury.

In his paper on the topography of the Palace of Lausus, Jonathan Bardill makes reference to the large building which is shown in the view of the Hippodrome in a drawing held in

² For John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 18.71, trans. E. and M. Jeffreys, R. Scott et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation* (Byzantina Australiensia 4, Melbourne 1986), 474–477; Psellos, *Chronographia*, Books 3–7. Psellos' *Chronographia* begins with the reign of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer (r. 976–1025) but contains first-hand accounts of events from the reign of Romanus III (1028–1034) to that of Isaac Comnenus. Psellos (3.39) notes, for example, that he saw Romanus III and on occasion talked with him. Nonetheless, there are few references to, and no descriptions of the Great Palace. See also Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* 6.8; 7.2; 9.15, where, it is striking how small a part the palace played in her narrative. Under the Comnenoi, the court was moved to the Blachernai palace.

³ *Freshfield Folio*, Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

⁴ C. Mango, *The Brazen House: a Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen 1959), 161–162.

⁵ E. Mamboury and Th. Wiegand, *Die Kaiserpaläste von Konstantinopel* (Berlin-Leipzig 1934), 26 and figs. 53, 55–57.

⁶ G. Brett, G. Martiny, and R.B.K. Stevenson, *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors* (London 1947); D. Talbot Rice (ed.), *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report* (Edinburgh 1958).

Trinity College Library, Cambridge, part of the late sixteenth century Freshfield Folio⁷ which contains representations of antiquities in the city of Constantinople, approximately 125 years after the fall of the city to the Ottoman Turks (Fig. 29).⁸ He examines various possibilities for its identity, noting that it could not be identified with St. Euphemia, as Mango had thought, as this converted Palace of Antiochos was no longer standing at the time of the Album's creation.⁹ Bardill identifies this building with the "Palace of Constantine" that is shown on various versions of the Vavassore map of the city, of the sixteenth century.

Bardill cites the report of John Sanderson of 1594:

At the end of this place, towards the Sofia, ar also to be seene certayne ruins of a great circle of a theator which was ther, where the people satt to see the playes and pastims that ther weare shewed. Nowe it is a place where in the lions and other animalls of the Great Turke ar kept¹⁰

Other visitors made reference to the "Palace of Constantine". Nicolas de Nicolay, *The Nauigations into Turkie*, London 1585 (Da Capo Press Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd. Amsterdam, New York, 1968) observed the following. In a passage on the antiquities of the city he refers to:

....the pallace of Conftantin the great, her firt reftorer, which ioyneth to the walles neare vnto the corner which is towards the Weft.

However this is an altogether different site – its title is a late misapprehension. The structure to which he refers is surely the so-called *Tekfur Saray*, which has been dated between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.¹¹ Müller-Wiener associates its rich brick decoration to the period of the development of the Blachernai Palace (c. 1260–1270). It was thus not used as an imperial palace until the final period of Byzantine rule in the city.

Fynes Morrison, *Itinerary*, London 1617¹² also makes reference to the "Palace of Constantine":

This city (as Rome) is said to contain Seven Hills, or mounts, within the walls: whereof some to me seemed imaginary; but I will reckon them as they do. And first begin with the hill, upon which stands the ruins of Constantine's

⁷ R.H.W. Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen nahe der Hagia Sophia und die Curia Justinians am Augusteion in Constantinople", *Architectura* 30 (2000), 1–25, n. 29.

⁸ J. Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus and Nearby Monuments in Constantinople: A Topographical Study", *AJA* 101:1 (1997), 67–95. For the Freshfield Album, see E.H. Freshfield, "Some Sketches made in Constantinople in 1574", *BZ* 30 (1929/30), 519–522 and plate II; *idem*, "Notes on a Vellum Album containing some Original Sketches of Public Buildings and Monuments Drawn by a German Artist who visited Constantinople in 1574", *Archaeologia* 72 (1922), 87–104 and plates XV–XXIII; cf. R.H.W. Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", 1–25.

⁹ Mango, "Le Diippion. Étude historique et topographique", *REB* 8 (1950), 152–161.

¹⁰ W. Foster (ed.), *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602 with his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence* (The Hakluyt Society 67:2, London 1931), in Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus", n. 138, 95.

¹¹ Mango places it in the reign of Michael VIII (late 13th century): C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York 1976), 275 and figs. 298–300.

¹² K. Parker, *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology* (London 1999), 140.

Palace. The second has the stately Mosque (or Turkish Church) built upon the Palace, which of old belonged to the Greek Patriarch.

Despite Morrison having lodged within Constantinople, it is uncertain as to whether he actually saw the ruins of the Palace he mentions, although they would certainly have been visible in certain areas. Morrison was broadly correct in his geography. He has perhaps followed Pierre Gilles in locating Constantine's palace on the first of Constantinople's supposed seven hills, a geographical characteristic that apparently followed the example of Rome. The site of the "stately Mosque" may be that of the Fatih Djami, before the construction of which (1463–1470), the Church of Holy Apostles was briefly used as the patriarchate church after Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque.¹³

This paper will examine the Freshfield Hippodrome drawing in relation to the identification of the building in question, and its topographical relation to the Great Palace and associated buildings and spaces (Fig. 29). The folio of drawings to which the view of the Hippodrome belongs was made by an unknown artist, possibly for or by Stefan Gerlach, the antiquarian chaplain to David Ungnad von Zonneck, the Imperial ambassador to the Ottoman Porte from 16 April to 23 September 1572, and again from 1574 to 1578.¹⁴ The depiction of certain buildings and monuments viewed from the north-western side of the former Hippodrome, or horse racing stadium, appears to indicate an entirely different level of observation to most other early-modern graphical descriptions of the topography of Constantinople. In it, together with a representation of Hagia Sophia and the monuments on the hippodrome, the Egyptian obelisk set up by Theodosius I in 390 A.D., the stone obelisk sheathed in bronze by Constantine VII in the tenth century, and the so-called Serpent Column, a bronze sculpture spoliated from Delphi by Constantine the Great and transformed into a fountain,¹⁵ a monumental, ruinous structure is also depicted, to the left, or south-east, of the great church. This structure cannot be confused with the *Carceres*, or chariot starting gates, of the Hippodrome, the latter which may, on the basis of the sixteenth century Vavassore aerial view, have resembled partially intact examples such as the Circus of Maxentius, outside Rome, or Humphrey's reconstruction of the *Carceres* of the Circus Maximus in Rome (Fig. 38).¹⁶ The drawing's value as a topographic document has been disputed by Stichel.¹⁷ It will be argued here that, on the contrary, its synthetic composition may be deconstructed, revealing its approximate location, and that the drawing describes the general area adjacent to the south-eastern face of the *Carceres*, and displays the ruins of

¹³ See W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen 1977), 405–411.

¹⁴ It should be noted however that Stichel argues that the artist was probably Lambert de Vos, working for Ungnad's predecessor, Karel Rijm: "Als aus führender Künstler kommt daher am besten Lambert de Vos in Frage, der Rijm auf seiner Reise nach Istanbul begleitete, und der im gleichen Jahr ein Album mit türkischen Trachten ausführte, das in Bremen erhalten ist: Hans Albrecht Koch (Hrsg.), *Das Kostümbuch des Lambert de Vos. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Original-format des Codex Ms. Or.9 aus dem Besitz der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen*, Graz 1991": Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", 2000.

¹⁵ P. Gilles, *The Antiquities of Constantinople* (repr. New York 1988), 76–85; C.R. Markham (trans.), *Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour, at Samarcand A.D. 1403–1406* (Hakluyt Society, London 1859). See also S. Casson, "Les fouilles de l'hippodrome de Constantinople", *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* (Paris 1930), 213–242.

¹⁶ Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", 1–25; cf. J. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses and Chariot Racing*, (Berkeley 1986).

¹⁷ Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", 6.

the adjacent church of St. John Diippion (otherwise known as St. John of the Dihippion, or St. John the Evangelist).¹⁸

At the time of the drawing's execution, it would appear that the structure was being used to accommodate lions.¹⁹ An inscription on the Freshfield Album drawing above the structure to the left of Hagia Sophia reads: "*Pars Aedificii S. Sophiae ubi nunc leones servantur, Hippodromi latus septentrionale*"²⁰ (Fig. 31). The keeping of lions by the ruler was a practice dating back to the Byzantine period, when they were housed near to the imperial palaces – they were recorded by Western visitors²¹ – and adopted by the Sultans after the conquest of Constantinople, the animals being housed in several old Byzantine church buildings in the vicinity of the Ottoman palace.²² The inscription must, however, be considered in relation to Sanderson's reference to a "great theatre" within which the lions were kept, and a later reference to lions being kept in the *Arslanhane*, or "House of the Lions", formerly the Church of Christ Chalkites, built by Romanus Lecapenus, then rebuilt by John Tzimiskes in 971.²³ After the conquest, this building came to be used to house lions on the lower level, and a workshop of illuminators, called *Nakkaşhane*, on the upper level. Was the artist relaying a commonplace story of the time?

In an article on the folio, which he had inherited from his father,²⁴ Freshfield analyzed the Hippodrome drawing, identifying the large building immediately to the left (south-west) of Hagia Sophia as, originally, a cruciform plan building (he thought it to be the church of St. Stephen) (Figs. 32 and 33). The building appears ruinous, or heavily modified, and covered by accretions – both annexes and wooden galleries. The two gables appear to show traces of brick arches, where possibly half-round windows had previously existed. Close study suggests that several separate buildings have been conflated by the view into one building. To the left is what appears to be a "modern" wall, ended by the entrance to a lane. Further to the right is a small, probably late-mediaeval structure, behind which is a large wall of what appear to be ashlar stones, or alternating brick and stone bands which appears ruinous at its right-hand end. Behind it are later, possibly Ottoman structures, with overhanging timber upper storeys.

At the rear of these structures is what could be the timber exo-narthex of a church or public building, behind which may be depicted the central doorway. Freshfield notes that the drawing depicts "a stone or marble wall with pillars...the latter are decorated by Corinthian capitals".²⁵ Indeed, the drawing does appear to show a principal façade finished in marble, possibly revetment, with what appear to be marble columns or pilasters, and marble capitals (Fig. 34). To either side of the central entrance framed by the columns are rectangular window openings. Above the roofing of the exo-narthex is what appears to be a gable end in ruinous condition, revealing roof timbers behind. On the other hand, the roofing seems incongruent with the overall disposition of the building, suggesting that a more recent structure has been erected over the ruined walls of the original building. Other features, possibly piers, emerge above this roof, and may be the remains of a disappeared cupola. To the extreme left, behind a strutted timber upper storey of Ottoman appearance, is

¹⁸ Mango, "Le Diippion. Étude Historique et Topographique", 155.

¹⁹ Foster, *John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602*, cited by Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus", n. 138.

²⁰ "Part of the building structure (of) S. Sophia where now lions are kept, Hippodrome north side."

²¹ On the subject of reports of the *Arslanhane*, see Mango, *Brazen House*, 154–169.

²² S. Eyice, "Sur l'archéologie de l'édifice dit «Arslanhane» et de ses environs", *Istanbul Arkeol. Müze. Yill* 11 (1964), 23–33, 141–146.

²³ Eyice, "Sur l'archéologie de l'édifice dit Arslanhane et ses environs", 142.

²⁴ Freshfield, "Some Sketches", 519–522 and plate II; *idem*, "Notes on a Vellum Album", 87–104 and plates XV–XXIII.

²⁵ Freshfield, "Some Sketches", 522.

a triangular-shaped wall, sloping down to the left, away from the central structure. This wall, which appears to be of stone masonry, is pierced by a large arched opening with a recessed panel with small window, the latter possibly a later addition. Between the exonarthex, and the strutted structures is another framed structure of three storeys, possibly a staircase. Freshfield identifies the timber galleries as those structures, cited by Buondelmonte in the early fifteenth century, where the Empress and her ladies in waiting could witness the events in the Hippodrome.²⁶

....this block of buildings represents all that was left of the church of St. Stephen and the wall which contained the galleries for the Empress and her suite to witness the proceedings in the Hippodrome; for she and her ladies-in-waiting did not attend the Sovran (*sic*) and his entourage at the Kathisma or Imperial Tribune.

*Et primo versus Sophiam est ecclesia cum muro magnifico et innumerabilium fenestrarum ornatu, ubi dominae et iuenculae cum matronis suos prospiciebant dilectos.*²⁷

Considering the date of the drawing, almost certainly executed between 1570 and 1578,²⁸ the small domed structures in front of the south-western flank of Hagia Sophia (Fig. 35) would appear to be too early to be Ottoman tombs (other than that of Selim II of 1576–1577). The left-hand small dome may therefore be identified, through comparison with photographic evidence, as the western-most domed roof over the first floor gallery of the church. The artist has concealed the Justinianic Baptistery behind an apparently three-storey structure, possibly part of the Patriarchal palace complex, which is known to have communicated with the gallery. This area has been recently investigated by Dark and Kosteneç, who have proposed the location of the patriarchal halls.²⁹ Further to the right, there are further domes from the gallery (the artist has omitted one dome from the central bay) and also what appear to be, as Freshfield noted, some ruins adjacent to the right-hand minaret of Hagia Sophia.³⁰ These are barely visible, and easily confused with the adjacent buildings, and abutment supports of the church. It is possible that they are the remains of the original external boundary wall of the Baths of Zeuxippus, or those of the late-antique Senate House located to the east of the Augusteion forum, which Stichel proposes was converted into the Patriarchal *triclinos*, the Thomaïtes, in the early seventh century, and destroyed by fire in 790.

²⁶ Cristoforo Buondelmonte, *Descriptio Urbis Constantinopolis*, ed. N. Bryennium (Leipzig 1824), 180, cited by Freshfield, "Some Sketches", 522. There were probably still at the time marble seats of the original hippodrome visible above what was then ground level. I am grateful to Ken Dark for this observation.

²⁷ Freshfield, "Some Sketches", 522 and n. 1.

²⁸ Stichel attributes the drawings to the Dutch artist Lambert de Vos, who accompanied the H.R. Imperial ambassador (embassy 1570–1574), and proposes that the latter was the original owner. Freshfield concluded that the owner was the succeeding ambassador, David Ungnad von Zonneck (16 April to 23 September 1572, and again from 1574 to 1578). Either way, the drawing may be thus datable between 1570 and 1578.

²⁹ K. Dark and J. Kosteneç, "The Hagia Sophia Project, Istanbul, 2004–2008", *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies* 35 (2009), 56–68.

³⁰ Freshfield, "Some Sketches", 521.

The Nature of the Freshfield Hippodrome View

The Freshfield drawing (Fig. 29) appears to be a synthetic view,³¹ a combination of two separate studies: the obelisks and Serpent Column, viewed approximately frontally, and the Hagia Sophia and adjacent structures, viewed obliquely. Stichel is correct in noting the impossibility of accurately reconciling these two groups of monuments in the manner deployed by the Freshfield draftsman. Nonetheless, the drawing's close representation of Hagia Sophia and its adjacent structures, which are depicted in some detail, appears to have been based on direct observation, as do the very detailed drawings of the Column of Arcadius by the same artist which are also contained in the Freshfield Album.³² This collection of drawings would appear to derive from a serious antiquarian interest, and a desire to record the actual appearances of ancient buildings and objects. It continues the tradition begun by the detailed drawings of Melchior Lorichs, carried out during the ambassadorial term of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (Imperial Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, Constantinople 1554–1562).³³

Comparison with other visual sources for the Hippodrome

It should be noted that there are two possible depictions of structures in Lorichs' Panorama of Istanbul, 1559 (Fig. 30), which may correspond to the building shown in the Freshfield Album.³⁴ There is a large building near to Hagia Sophia, coloured in reddish ink, which possesses an awkwardly composed roof – perhaps the re-roofed structure shown in the Freshfield Album. To the right of this building – which, given the lack of detail, could be either of basilican or cruciform plan – is a domed church structure, likely to be of central plan. If Bardill is not correct in disputing the possibility of survival of some portion of the Palace of Antiochos, transformed into the church of St. Euphemia, then this depicted structure might be identified with that building. To its right is a tower – perhaps the same tower depicted on another of the Freshfield images, seen through copies in Dresden and Vienna.³⁵ A very large domed structure is shown further to the right, seen in association with two smaller domes adjacent to its right. However this last domed structure would seem to be too distant for the Freshfield view, which appears to have been made close to the present-day intersection of Divan Yolu Caddesi and At Meydani Caddesi, just to the south of the intersection, and possibly includes a composite of views from further west, and south, from where, for example, the Serpent Column and two obelisks – seen in considerable detail – would have been observed.

Bardill refers to the opinion of Cyril Mango that the description by Sanderson may refer to the ruins of the *Carceres*.³⁶ The depictions by Vavassore and Panvinio of what appear to be the remains of the *Carceres*, however, show a markedly different structure.³⁷ In both cases, they show large, ruinous building structures at the northern end of the Hippodrome. Panvinio's 1580 view of the Hippodrome shows a slightly convexly-curving building with a giant archway and tower at the north-western end, and a series of monumental arches facing the *spina* (Figs. 37 and 38). The ruined south-eastern end indicates a three-storied sectional structure to the building, although the south-western façade only indicates two

³¹ Mango and S. Yerasimos, *Melchior Lorichs' Panorama of Istanbul – 1559* (Bern 1999), Sheet 6.

³² Conversation with Dr. K.R. Dark.

³³ O.G.d. Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. E.S. Forster (Oxford 1968).

³⁴ Mango and Yerasimos, *Melchior Lorichs' Panorama of Istanbul*, Sheet Six.

³⁵ Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", Images 1 and 6.

³⁶ Mango, *Brazen House*, nn. 45, 158.

³⁷ A. Berger, "Bemerkungen zum Hippodrom von Konstantinopel", *Boreas* 20 (1997), 5–15, here figs. 3 and 4. For the *Freshfield Album*, see above n. 8.

storeys. There is no apparent separate monumental structure behind the *Carceres* – significantly enough, there are no large structures depicted in the approximate location of St. Euphemia/Palace of Antiochos. What appears to be a small chapel with multiple domes is depicted north-east of the *Carceres*, but it is much too small to be the same structure, unless radically altered through the process of copying. The inaccuracy of the drawing is attested by the impossible location and size of Justinian’s monumental column. It is worth further noting Manners’ opinion that the Panvinio view is probably a copy of a section of the Vavassore original or one of its copies.³⁸

Vavassore’s city view of 1520, based on a lost drawing of circa 1479, and possibly deriving from a lost drawing by Gentile Bellini,³⁹ depicts a simplified *Carceres* structure which has become confused with another structure behind it (Fig. 39). In the later aerial map by Braun and Hogenberg of 1572, which was based upon the Vavassore map, the two structures have become connected, so that the *Carceres* appears as a colonnaded two storey perimeter building to a monumental 3–4 storied circular building, albeit ruinous, that is labelled as *palatio ritondo di Costantino*. Similarly, the convexly curved wall and ruined vaults shown on the Vavassore view are far more fragmentary than the *palatio ritondo* of Braun and Hogenberg. Significantly, both the versions of this view show a tower at the south-eastern end of the *Carceres*, unlike the later Panvinio view. Stichel has emphasized the process of distortion undergone as views were copied from one edition to another.⁴⁰ The depiction of the *Carceres* would seem to be an example of such distortion. There does seem, however, to be a marked difference between the probable appearance of the *Carceres*, and the “Palace of Constantine” shown in these representations, and the “theatre” described by Sanderson.

There is thus a great uncertainty concerning the location, identity, and reality of this structure. It could perhaps refer to the St. Euphemia hexagon, although Bardill argues on archaeological grounds that this building had long disappeared by the time of the views, or it may have been the remains of the *Carceres*, although the ruined structure would appear to be too large and typologically different for this attribution. It could, as Bardill suggests, be a theatre on the southern side of the Mese. Alternatively, it could be the Octagon, a large centralized hall adjoining the Basilica on its south-eastern or south-western side accommodating the early university, which was supposedly destroyed in the Nika Riots of

³⁸ Here a crucial question must be asked as to whether the artist had ever actually seen the site, or had copied an earlier birds-eye view of the site, as Manners argues with regard to the Vavassore print. See I.R. Manners, “Constructing the Image of a City: The Representation of Constantinople in Christopher Buondelmonti’s *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Volume 87:1 (1997), 72–102, at 93–94. The Panvinio view was printed in 1600 in Venice, and professes to show the area of the Hippodrome prior to the Ottoman conquest. It is thus, at most, a copy of an earlier drawing, since it appears to show the Nea church on its terrace, which was destroyed in an explosion in 1490.

³⁹ See Manners, “Constructing the Image of a City”, 72–102; M. Iuliani, “Venezia e la pianta di Costantinopoli: Gentile Bellini e Giovanni Andrea Vavassore, 1479–1520”, in C. de Seta and B. Marin (eds.) with the collaboration of M. Iuliano, *Le Città dei Cartografi. Studi e Ricerche di Storia Urbana* (Naples 2008), 106–119. Iuliani associates the origin of the view with a hypothetical map prepared by the topographer George Amiroutzes of Trabzon, who worked for Sultan Mehmet II, that was supposedly the origin of a painting by Bellini of the city, which in turn becomes the model for later representations (Rosselli, Vavassore).

⁴⁰ “Dies alles macht deutlich, daß die Ansichten vom Vavassore-Typus nur mit allergrößter Zurückhaltung benutzt werden dürfen; als Quelle für eine topographische Erforschung von Konstantinopel-Istanbul sind sie nur ansatzweise brauchbar”: Stichel, “Das Coliseo de Spiriti in Konstantinopel: ein Phantom- Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung der Stadt ansicht vom Vavassore-Typus”: *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 51 (2001), 445–459, at 459.

532. According to Cyril Mango, it was a re-used structure of an early Byzantine Palace, possibly that of Lausos, converted into the Church of St. John the Baptist (St. John in the Diippion).⁴¹ His argument was based upon references to a menagerie that was located between the Palace of Ibrahim Pasha and the Firuz Ağa Camii, to the west of the Hippodrome.

The structure shown in the Vavassore view may indeed be a ruined remnant of part of the Palace of Lausos, but the connection to the Church of St. John of the Diippion is likely to be incorrect. This has, I believe, been effectively disproved by Bardill⁴² who argues, on the basis of the inscription on the Freshfield drawing, that the ruinous building depicted there was close to Hagia Sophia, to the east of the Firuz Ağa Camii, and thus cannot have been located on the west flank of the hippodrome, as Mango had argued:

Despite the inaccuracies...the building evidently stood north of the *carceres* (starting gates) or close to the northeast corner of the Hippodrome. Hence there were two menageries in this part of the city in the 15th and 16th centuries, one near St. Sophia, the other on the opposite side of the Hippodrome, between the Palace of Ibrahim Paşa and the Firuz Ağa Camii. The menagerie visited by Gilles could have been either of these, but given that he describes it as *sito prope Sophiam, olim Augustaeo appellato*, it is much more likely that he visited the one in the two views we have discussed.⁴³

The nature of the Freshfield view of the Hippodrome

The Freshfield drawing is likely to be, on the basis of the incongruence of apparent viewpoint for the buildings in relation to that for the obelisks, a synthetic view,⁴⁴ but its close representation of Hagia Sophia, depicted in some detail, and its adjacent structures, appears to have been based upon on-site observation, as do the detailed drawings of the Column of Arcadius by the same artist that are also contained in the Freshfield Album. The apparent veracity of the drawings of extant buildings and monuments support the contention that the artist has attempted to depict the hippodrome structures with a concern for veracity. Indeed, this collection of drawings would appear to derive from a serious antiquarian interest, and a desire to record the actual appearances of ancient buildings and objects. It should be noted however that Stichel, while accepting that details had been sketched from life, concludes that the synthetic basis of the drawing renders unreliable its topographical information. This contention will be tested below.

Bardill argues that the building depicted in the Freshfield drawing, and possibly also the domed structure shown to the right of the *Carceres* in Panvinio's later but less accurate view,⁴⁵ is probably the church of St. John of the Diippion, which had been commenced by Phokas (602–610), and dedicated to his namesake, St. Phokas, only to be completed and rededicated by Heraclius (610–641) as the church of St. John the Theologian after his overthrow of Phokas.⁴⁶ The sources do not define the church's location exactly. A reference by Choniates suggests that the church was to be found south of the Mese, the main street

⁴¹ Mango, *Le Développement Urbain de Constantinople: (IV^e–VII^e siècles): Travaux et Memoires du Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzantium* (repr. Paris 1990), 59 and n. 46.

⁴² Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus", 69, 89 and n. 106.

⁴³ Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus", 91–92.

⁴⁴ Stichel, "Sechs Kolossal Säulen", 6.

⁴⁵ W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen 1977), 70, fig. 48.

⁴⁶ Bardill, "The Palace of Lausus", 67–95.

running along the ridge of the promontory on which the old city was situated.⁴⁷ Another source cited by Bardill describes land being given to a restorer of the church in 1402, consisting of “all the land opposite stoas of the holy church...from the ascending street as far as the public stoa.”⁴⁸ In relation to the Freshfield view, if one were to define the “public stoa” as that facing the Hippodrome and vaguely shown in the Vavassore view, then the rag-tag assortment of structures to the left and in front of the “church” in the Freshfield drawing may be the structures on the land referred to, which would support Berger’s statement that the Church of the Diippion was located between the Mese, the main artery through this area, and the Hippodrome.⁴⁹ An alternative explanation may be put forward, that the church occupies the land within the elbow formed by the Mese and the “descending street”, in which case the stoas would more closely correspond to these fronting structures in the view.

The Freshfield Album drawing may assist in determining the position of the Diippion church in relation to the Mese. It is, as mentioned, a view towards the northern side of the Hippodrome. The depiction of Hagia Sophia may be used to locate the viewing angle, as the drawing depicts the western-most buttress on the south-western façade obscuring half of its great arched window panel. A line connecting this point on the plan of the area runs at a south-western angle intersecting with the north-west side of the Hippodrome between the fifth century ruins of the Palace of Antiochos and the so-called Palace of Lausos, and the early sixteenth century palace of Ibrahim Paşa.⁵⁰

A second characteristic of the drawing is that it does not appear to have been drawn from ground level – there is too much detail revealed of the great dome’s ribbing, which would have been partially obscured from ground level (Fig. 40).⁵¹ This could be explained by the artist sketching from an elevated level. This could have been done from the ruined walls of the Palace of Antiochos, if indeed the semicircular structure in the Vavassore view is of it, or from one of the later buildings which Vavassore shows built around it. Similarly, the hieroglyphics on the great granite obelisk erected by Theodosius I would surely have required observation from above ground level. This could have been done from the upper levels of the Palace of Ibrahim Paşa, a great building erected over the remains of the north-western side of the Hippodrome in the early sixteenth century.⁵² This suggests that the drawing is indeed a composite of separate views, assembled into a synthetic view. A photograph from the end of the nineteenth century appears to be taken from an almost identical viewpoint (Fig. 41).

If the location of the observation point for the drawing of Hagia Sophia proposed above is correct, then the cone of vision within which the “Church of St. John of Diippion” was located could be approximately established (Fig. 42). The upper and lower walls of the south-western façade of this building cut in front of the north-western semi-dome of Hagia Sophia, while the façade of an unidentified, probably Ottoman building (assuming it lies upon the alignment of the boundary wall of the later *türbe* of Sultan Ahmet) ends at a street corner directly in line with the westernmost buttress of Hagia Sophia (Fig. 43). This

⁴⁷ Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, 92 and nn. 117–118 Bardill cites Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (CFHB, Berlin-New York 1975), 235–238; *Patria* (II, 35 with variant G); *Synaraxion*, ed. H. Delahaye (Brussels 1902), 70, 82, 151, 305–306, 437, 598, 810, 836, 855–856, 866.

⁴⁸ Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, n. 118; cf. Mango, “Le Diippion”, 153–154, 159.

⁴⁹ See A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* (Bonn 1988), 277–280.

⁵⁰ Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, 92 and n. 122.

⁵¹ I am grateful to my colleague Charles Mann for pointing this out to me.

⁵² Dr. Ken Dark has noted that there is a terrace where the museum tea-shop is today, which would have been convenient as a sketching location.

building is described in some detail, and cannot be confused with the Hasseki Hürrem Hammami located further to the southeast. It appears to be located over the ruins excavated by Casson in 1927 and 1928, suggesting that the ruins of the Noumera prison (a structure that was probably a reused part of the baths of Zeuxippos) had been incorporated into a new Ottoman building (Fig. 44).⁵³ A street is shown bending past this building corner, and heading to the southeast.⁵⁴ The Kauffer-Le Chevalier map of Istanbul of 1807, despite its imprecise nature, does show a street in this location, with the adjacent text: “Astane Hane...Menagerie” (Fig. 45).⁵⁵ Thus Hasseki Hürrem Hammami may well lie over part of that structure which Mango has associated with a chapel attached to the Byzantine palace gate of Chalke,⁵⁶ which would place it immediately to the south of the Augusteion. Bardill argues that this structure replaced the former church of St. John as the Sultan’s menagerie.

Archaeological and Testimonial Evidence for “St. John Diippion”

In his study of the Great Palace, Paspates referred to a “great oval marble basin”, obviously displaced, found in the enclosure of the Zeineb Sultan mosque, to the west of Hagia Sophia, which he believed to be the baptismal font of the church of “St. John Baptist”. Paspates appears to have confused the Baptistery of Hagia Sophia with the nearby church of St. John.⁵⁷ He distinguished this so-called baptismal church of St. John from the church of St. John Diippion, noting that the latter church was built by Nikephoros Phokas (963–969) in the Augusteion as “a church without a roof,” near statues of two horses (hence the name), the church being renewed by Basil the Macedonian (presumably Basil II, 976–1025). However he named the wrong emperor. As noted above, the emperor Phokas (602–610) constructed the church, and dedicated it to St. Phokas. Basil the Macedonian, or Basil I (867–886), was a great builder – he renovated both the churches of Hagia Sophia and Holy Apostles, while building the Nea, the last great church of the palace, so he is more likely to have restored the church of St. John than the later Basil II. The date of the latter building which, as previously stated, was built in the early seventh century, makes it almost contemporary with the Peristyle Courtyard in its first phase (see below on the St. Andrews

⁵³ Stanley Casson (ed.), *Preliminary Report upon the Excavations carried out in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1927, on behalf of the British Academy* (London 1928), 20–24.

⁵⁴ For a hypothesis on the identity of this street, see my discussion of Paspates’ topographical analysis below.

⁵⁵ *Kauffer-Le Chevalier map of Istanbul*, Kauffer and Le Chevalier Mapmakers (1807), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library.

⁵⁶ Mango, *Brazen House*; for the Chapel of Our Lord, see chapter 5, 149–169.

⁵⁷ Alexandros Paspates, *The Great Palace*, translated by W. Metcalfe, (London: Alexander Gardiner, 1893), 120–122. Paspates associated the location of the church of St. Mark with the southeast area of Hagia Sophia. He noted that Byzantios placed it to the north-east of Hagia Sophia, but that Du Cange placed it near the Horologion, a sundial or early clock, to the south of Hagia Sophia. Paspates noted in support of the latter that “in 1876, while clearing the ground to the west of s. Sophia, which was then occupied by work-shops, and poor Turkish dwelling-houses, two colossal marble pillars were uncovered on the south-west side supporting a brick arch. Some months later, the pillars fell, were broken to pieces, and disappeared. The passage under this arch was called the Anethas” (121–122). This structure is almost certainly the same one observed and drawn by C.G. Curtis around the same time. Curtis declared the structure to be the Colymbion, or ritual-washing reservoir, for worshippers to cleanse themselves before entering the Great Church: see C.G. Curtis, *Broken Bits of Byzantium, Part 2: Within the City: the Land Walls*, 1891, Drawing No. 4. Curtis notes: “Ruins of the Great Court...In the midst of this court stood the Colymbion, a reservoir for washing hands before entering the Church. It bore the famous “palindrome” line attributed to Gregory Theologus – NICONANOMHMA MHMONANOCIN the original of that inscribed on several fonts in England.” He further notes that the arch remains and columns were removed “since 1873.”

excavation). Certainly the extensive use of marble revetment on its façade, as depicted on the Freshfield Hippodrome drawing, would place it as likely to be an early church (Fig. 34).⁵⁸ While later Byzantine churches also used extensive marble revetment, albeit spoliated, the apparently correct classical *taxis* of the façade of the structure visible in the Freshfield drawing distinguishes it from these structures.

One possibility that must be considered is that archaeological evidence for the church may be provided by the remains of “Building 1” excavated by the British Academy team under Casson in 1927 and 1928 (Fig. 44).⁵⁹ Bardill attributes the main part of Building 1 to the sixth century, and the rebuilding of the Zeuxippus complex by Justinian after 532. On the basis of comparison of building techniques with known dated building examples, he accepts Building 1 as part of the Baths.⁶⁰ This is despite the fact that all the known examples of imperial bath complexes were designed as unitary complexes. Both the Milan and Trier examples bear this out.⁶¹ The argument for Building 1 being part of the baths is seriously weakened by it being separated from another structure, designated Building 2, by an open space, possibly a street, given its approximate alignment with the outside of the Hippodrome.⁶² Furthermore, the archaeological evidence cited by Bardill is less than conclusive – he notes that the brickstamps recorded by Casson’s team come from a highly disturbed part of the site. This means that the found brickstamps cannot be associated with a particular phase of building – they could either be from an original Justinianic structure, or spoliated for a later structure, as elsewhere in the vicinity. Furthermore, Bardill does not separately examine the brick-stamps of Buildings 1 and 2. He admits that the brick finds do not belong to a single construction phase, and their find-spots are not known.⁶³ Thus, the brick dating evidence for Building 1 is not conclusive and cannot be used to preclude a building date for this structure of around 600. Bardill’s description of pure brickwork with occasional courses of stone as definitely being of the sixth century must be qualified by the paucity of evidence for how public buildings of the end of the sixth century were constructed.

The remains of Building 1 indicate the presence of a large circular space (calculated in the first report as having a diameter of 11.5m), defined by massive piers. Rather than being seen as a dependency of the Baths, could the remains be differently interpreted as the central domed space of a possibly cross-in-square planned church, as seems to be depicted by the Freshfield Hippodrome drawing?

In the preceding discussion regarding the location of the church of St. John Diippon, it was proposed that the Freshfield Folio drawing shows it at a location which can be identified as close to the site of Building 1. The existence of the fragment of a marble ashlar

⁵⁸ Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, 92. His source for the commissioning monarch is the *Synaraxion of Constantinople*, ed. Delehay, 70, 836 (St Phokas) and 150–151, 437 (St. Tryphon, chapel within church of St. John).

⁵⁹ S. Casson, *Hippodrome of Constantinople* (1st report, 1928); *Hippodrome of Constantinople* (2nd report, 1929).

⁶⁰ J. Bardill, *Brick Stamps of Constantinople* (Oxford 2004), 68.

⁶¹ For Trier Baths, see H. Cüppers, “Die Kaiserthermen in Trier. Zerstörung, Erforschung, Konservierung und Restaurierung”, in *Rekonstruktion in der Denkmalpflege. Überlegungen. Definitionen. Erfahrungsberichte. Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Nationalkomitees für Denkmalschutz* 57 (Bonn, 1997), 25–29; for Milan Baths, see A. Salvioni (ed.), *Mostra Milano Capitale dell’Impero Romano (286–402 d.C)* (Milan 1990), figs. 1 and 2, 2a.9: Baths of Hercules.

⁶² Bardill, *Brick Stamps*, 68. It is not contested, however, that Building 2 was part of the Baths of Zeuxippus. The large curved wall excavated on the western side of this complex does accord with other Late Roman examples of Palaestrae.

⁶³ Bardill, *Brick Stamps*, 116.

wall of early date (possibly Roman?) leaves open the possibility that there had been a former building on the site which comprised part of the original baths complex but which may have had another function. Mango cites a reference to an inn being situated between the Baths and the Hippodrome.⁶⁴ Indeed, the space between Casson buildings 1 and 2 can be interpreted as a street or lane, continuing the passage between the Palace and the Hippodrome. The south-western boundary of the Baths can be identified by the structure “E.a” shown on the Mamboury Palace site plan of 1932.⁶⁵

Architectural Character of “St. John of the Diippion”

If, as seems most likely, the large structure in the Freshfield drawing is the church of St. John of the Diippion, then it must be noted that there are several elements that appear to indicate mis-observations (Fig. 33). The visible side façade shows a full-height transept projecting to the west, slightly beyond the alignment of the side aisle towards the southern, or entrance end. On its western face, it is strengthened by full-height lateral buttresses. Set within the wall is a large arch, which was, originally, probably filled in with multiple window panels. On the other, northern side of this transept, a ruined wall appears to be on the same alignment as the said side aisle, but extends in height above it. The structure as depicted corresponds to no known Byzantine church type. Given the likelihood of a centralized, or at least cross-in-square plan, we may suppose that the artist has joined together the sidewall of the nave, and the outer wall of the aisle, in his depiction. Close observation of both west-facing walls reveals that each has an arch of similar height in the masonry, both of which have been filled in. The extrados could be either brick or stone – as may be the entire wall. The building is usually described as being of brick construction, presumably because of the reddish tinge to its colouring in the drawing, but may be of brick and stone banding. We may reasonably suppose that multiple windows with stone architraves were originally inserted within these arches.

The main, southern façade indicates, as Bardill has noted, marble revetment (probably the local grey-white Proconnesian variety), with marble columns and capitals either side of the monumental entrance. An upper-storey balcony obscures the rest of the façade. However, if a seventh century dating is accepted, it may perhaps be restored with an arched opening above the entrance – a conventional Byzantine technique – with the lower architraves running up to an entablature, above which the architrave continues to frame the arched opening. To either side of the entrance are shown vertical, rectangular windows. These, too, would probably have been framed by architraves, such as are found at Hagia Sophia.

The rest of the southern façade is certainly comprised of piecemeal additions – of which the balcony perhaps belongs to the ladies’ balconies for viewing events in the Hippodrome as reported by Buondelmonte (see below). The northern wall, reported to have faced the Milion, a monument which marked the centre of the city and from where distance were measured,⁶⁶ may be supposed to have framed a central, axial apse. The original roof-shape is uncertain, but may have comprised the form of a dome rising on a square masonry base, with the nave and transepts having simple pitched roofs, as with the earlier St. Irene, rebuilt by the emperor Justinian I in the sixth century, and rebuilt after an earthquake in the eighth century. This dome-on-cross construction would consist of four substantial arches forming a base for the springing of the dome, and probably bearing on masonry piers rather than columns. The arch visible on the central bay of the western façade may thus have

⁶⁴ Mango, *The Brazen House*, 40 and n. 21.

⁶⁵ Mamboury and Wiegand, *Die Kaiserpaläste*, 45 and fig. 95.

⁶⁶ Mango, “Diippion”, 156.

corresponded to the radial dimension of the internal supporting arch. In front of the southern façade, we can imagine a simple portico, with its roof and entablature supported by marble columns. Indeed, Buondelmonte reported having seen there a balcony supported on marble columns.⁶⁷ If such a restoration could be made, it would connect this structure as a rare early precedent to the later Middle Byzantine cross-domed churches as, for example, the church of St. Sophia in Bizye, perhaps of the late eighth to ninth century, with its upper side aisles probably for women, or the church at Dereâğzi, possibly of the late ninth century (Figs. 46 and 47).⁶⁸ If St. John Diippion possessed an upper gallery on its east, west and north sides, within a square structure supporting a dome as at the latter church, it would explain how the church could later be adapted to provide access to a south-facing gallery.

Site Layout of St. John Diippion

The church was, in all probability, built in the early seventh century, at which date it is probable that the *Carceres*, or starting gates for the Hippodrome, was still intact, given its restoration under Justinian, and its depiction in the views of Vavassore and Panvinio. A courtyard may perhaps be placed between the northeastern wall of the *Carceres* and the south-western façade of the church.⁶⁹

The Freshfield Folio drawing was apparently drawn at a time when the *Carceres* was either partly or wholly demolished. The latter would appear to have been extant, but partly ruinous in the fifteenth century, as a portion of it is reproduced in the early sixteenth century Vavassore aerial view which, as noted, is thought to be a copy of a fifteenth century drawing, possibly by Gentile Bellini.⁷⁰ The stalls and balconies in the Freshfield drawing appear to have replaced the eastern end of the *Carceres*. Any surviving portions would have lain outside (to the left of) the frame of the drawing. The question arises as to whether these stalls, and the ruined walls shown in the drawing, did in fact approximate to the location of the *Carceres*. Berger has estimated the total length of the Hippodrome stadium, from the inside of the Sphendone to the *Carceres*, as approximately 440m.⁷¹ This places the south-eastern end of the *Carceres* approximately opposite the north porch of the tomb of Sultan Ahmed, and, significantly, also in alignment with the south-eastern boundary of the archaeological finds of a building thought by Casson to be the Baths of Zeuxippos. The arched entrance into the hippodrome would then align with a street separating the Baths and the Palace (Fig. 48). Mango has argued that the Diippion was an open space, or a kind of public vestibule, at the threshold of the entrance into the Hippodrome, where contestants in the games could mount their horses.⁷² The name of the place clearly refers to horses. The church of St. John was, then, located at or near this location, and in view of the Milion to the north, across the Mese, the main thoroughfare.

Perhaps of relevance here is the observation by Paspates of building remains on the northern side of the hippodrome, found in the garden of a café located there – thus on the

⁶⁷ Buondelmonte, *Descriptio Urbis Constantinopolis*, cited by Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 45–46.

⁶⁸ Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, 97–180.

⁶⁹ Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, 89–95.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of early views of Constantinople, see I. R. Manners, “Constructing the Image of a City: The Representation of Constantinople”, in Buondelmonte’s “*Liber Insularum Archipelagi*”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87:1 (1997), 72–102. The attribution of Bellini by Manners is convincingly nuanced by Iuliani, who argues, after Mordtmann, for an original map made by the topographer George Amiroutzes of Trabzon: see Iuliani, “Venezia e la pianta di Costantinopoli”, 106–119.

⁷¹ Berger, “*Bemerkungen zum Hippodrom von Konstantinopel*”, 5–15.

⁷² Mango, “Diippion”, 153.

site that now extends the area of At Meidan, the Ottoman urban square, to the north-east.⁷³ Paspates noted “foundations of Byzantine buildings, constructed as usual of large bricks” but did not give their dimension. He speculated, incorrectly, that this might be the location of the Kathisma. It may, however, be related to either the *Carceres* or the church of St. John Diippion, and would be to the north or north-west of the above-mentioned street.

At this point, it is necessary to emphasize a problem with topographical analysis of the area of Sultanahmet district relating to the Palace. The streets have undergone substantial re-routing, erasure and new insertion since the first maps of the eighteenth century (for example Kauffer 1786, or Kauffer-Le Chevalier 1807), and have also changed significantly since the first accurate survey maps of the early twentieth century. Two major changes to the topography of the area were caused by, firstly, the construction of the first Ottoman university (later the Law Courts), which was built over the site of a road leading north to the eastern flank of Hagia Sophia, and secondly, the extension of At Meydani to the north, and the widening and prologation to the east of Divan Yolu Caddesi. It is clearly evident that, in the eighteenth century, At Meydani only extended as far as the approximate alignment of the present day street of Dalbastı Sokağı (to the east of At Meydani). A road ran to the east, then dog-legged to the north, before resuming an eastern direction (see detail, Kauffer-Le Chevalier map, Fig. 130). On the basis of the evidence of the recent IAM excavations, notably the location of the west wall of the Chalkê (or Scholes) courtyard, and the pictorial evidence related by Mango (1959), it is evident that the church of Christ Chalkites, thought by Bardill to be the second Byzantine church used to house lions (the “*Astane Hane*” of the Kauffer-Le Chevalier map), must have been located west of this dog-leg, and thus south of, and adjacent to, the Chalkê Gate.⁷⁴ A second consequence of this different configuration of the eighteenth century square of At Meydani is that the layout in the sixteenth century was definitely different to the present street layout, and will have more closely resembled that of the eighteenth century. This street alignment is compatible with Ottoman buildings earlier than the Freshfield view, such as the Firuz Ağa mosque, of 1491, and the Haseki Hürüm baths of 1556. It ran south of the Kabasakal medrese, which, together with its mosque located further to the south, was probably built in the eighteenth century. It is thus most likely that the unidentified structure in the Freshfield view was located to the north of the east-west road, to the north of At Meydani, and to the south of the present day Divan Yolu Caddesi (Fig. 49).⁷⁵

In *Theophanes Continuatus*, there is a reference to the location of a church of St. John: “...at the very entrance of the gate called Monothiros, is the most beautiful chapel of St.

⁷³ Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 45–46.

⁷⁴ See E. Bolognesi Recchi-Franceschini, “Il Gran Palazzo”, in *Bizantinistica: Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, Serie Seconda Anno II (2000) 197–242, cf. fig. 2 for details of a 1912 municipal map depicting the Sultanahmet area; cf. the map of Istanbul, *Plan d'ensemble de la ville de Constantinople. Société Anonyme Ottomane d'Études et d'Enterprises Urbaines, Constantinople 1922*, copy held in Princeton University Library; C. Stolpe, *Plan von Constantinopel mit den Vorstädten, dem Hafen, und einem Theile des Bosphorus = Plan de Constantinople avec ses faubourgs, le port et une partie du Bosphore / aufgenommen und gezeichnet von C. Stolpe nach den zeitherigen Veränderungen berichtet bis zum Jahre 1882*, Constantinople: Lorentz and Keil, 1882, scale 1:15,000 (<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/maps/asian-cities/G7434-I8-1882-S86>, accessed 22/11/10 at 8pm).

⁷⁵ There are other consequences as well. The reference to “tombs” in the Kauffer-Le Chevalier refers to an area that is not where the royal tombs are located, but rather to the area of Ayasofya Meydani.

John the Divine, which the Emperor Basil himself built.”⁷⁶ This reference to, presumably, Basil I (867–886) should however indicate that the Continuator is referring to another chapel, within the palace grounds, and indeed possibly adjacent to the Monothynos of the Eidikon, mentioned in the Book of Ceremonies. Therefore, there is no firm basis to identify this Monothynos with either the large arched entrance, probably part of the remains of the Hippodrome, to the passage leading south on the Vavassore aerial view, or the gate by which, in the fight of 1182, the emperor Alexios’ soldiers left the palace in order to enter the Church of St. John.⁷⁷ It is difficult to establish which gate is referred to here – the nearest gate to the Diippion would have been the Chalkê vestibule. There was also a smaller gate – the “Iron Gate” – that gave access to a passage north of the Chalkê courtyard. Given the proximity, the gate shown in the Vavassore and Panvinio views is probably the gate of Diippion referred to in *De Ceremoniis* I, 70, where the factions of the Blues and the Greens are described as entering the Hippodrome by Diippion and by the Protothynos – if the Protothynos, the “first gate” were on the west, as is likely, then the Diippion gate would be on the east. It is however erroneous to associate it, as Paspates did, with the Monothynos of the palace.⁷⁸ The description by Choniates does, however, reveal the adjacency of the Church of St. John to the palace, and its close proximity also to the Milion.

Paspates also referred to the Monothynos in relation to then existing traces, such as the large retaining wall to the east of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque in the area then known as Ak Bughiúk Mahalesi. To the east of Kaba Sakal Sk. he noted a Byzantine wall with alternating bands of brick and stone, extending south as far as Arasta Sk.⁷⁹ This is immediately north of the area of the street of shops excavated by the St. Andrews team, and abuts the current IAM excavations in the grounds of the Four Seasons Hotel.⁸⁰ In this area, he noted various “Byzantine” remains, including a “small arched doorway” north of the retaining wall. On the western side of this gate were found “two marble columns with their bases and capitals” together with many bricks and fragments of marble without ornament or inscription.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Theophanes *Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1838), 336, cited by Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 123 and n. 1.

⁷⁷ Nicetas Choniates’ account of the battle of 2 May 1182, translated by Mango, *Brazen House*, 94–96. Paspates refers to this gate as Monothynos: see Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 123–124.

⁷⁸ Paspates, as noted above, confused the church, or chapel, of St. John, built by Basil I within the palace near to the gate of Monothynos, and the church of St. John of Diippion, located near to the Chalkê gate.

⁷⁹ This location is complicated by the substantial change in street layout since the early twentieth century fire in the area. As far as can be determined, based on the 1912 survey plan of the area, the area Paspates described is immediately to the north of Arasta Sk., rather than the current lane east of the former Kabasakal medrese, and north of Dalbastı Sk. As the wall reported by Paspates would have been approximately in line with Arasta Sk., it strengthens the theory that a wall, and possibly passage, ran south from the temenos of Chalke on an alignment with the present-day Arasta Sk.

⁸⁰ Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 150.

⁸¹ Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 152: “The length of the pillars was 4.45m (about 14 ft. 6 in.), and the circumference 1.75m (5 ft. 8 in.). The height of an adjacent capital was 0.55m (1 ft. 9 in.), and the breadth 0.77m (2 ft. 5 in.). A base, which lay in its original position, was about 3.75m distant from the wall. In my opinion these pillars formed a portion of the Passages of Achilles. From the situation of the base, I should suppose that the colonnade was about 3.75m (12 ft. 2 in.) broad, and 5m (16 ft. 3 in.) high. All these remains were soon after destroyed, and small Turkish houses were built upon the whole of the site. The little door was, I suspect, the gate called Monothynos.” Alternatively, the gate described could have been one of the portals described in the Book of Ceremonies encountered when the emperor walked from the Consistorium in the direction of Chalke and Hagia Sophia.

The location of this street may also accord with another piece of evidence. In the vicinity of what he thought to be the location of the Augustaeum, Paspates noted a lane called *Medresé Sokağı* to the south of the (then) university building in which he found Byzantine walls “with little low doorways”, suggesting that their original ground level was substantially lower.⁸² This laneway would have been that shown on the 1919 fire map of Istanbul⁸³ as immediately to the east of the Kabasakal Medrese. Paspates, erroneously, thought this area to be where the church of St. John had been located.⁸⁴ This appears to continue the confusion between the location of the churches of St. John and Christ Chalkites, caused by both structures having apparently been used as housing for lions (see above). While the walls and laneway are almost certainly not those shown on the Freshfield drawing, they may be associated with the western boundary of the palace, south of the Chalke temenos wall and the church of Christ Chalkites (Fig. 49).

The evidence of the Freshfield Folio drawing has raised questions about the identity of the remains of “Building 1” of the complex excavated by the Casson team, which were attributed by them to the Baths of Zeuxippos. Could they be the foundations of the church of St. John Diippion, or another adjacent building? The Freshfield drawing, assuming a height of about 10m for the two-level façade, appears to depict a building size of over 20m width and between 45 and 50m in length.⁸⁵ The southern boundary of the Baths of Zeuxippos were in all probability established by the ruins found by Mamboury and Wiegand at site “E: a”, adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the medrese, at 30–31m a.s.l., also placing the tomb of Sultan Ahmet over the site of the former eastern gate of the Hippodrome. The ruins of Building 1 include a massive pier at the south of the excavation (feature No. 14 on Casson plan (1928) (Fig. 44). Its location coincides with the estimated internal length of the Hippodrome estimated by Berger (440m), suggesting that it may be the northern pier of the stadium entrance known as the gate of Diippion. This would suggest that immediately to the north was a street giving access to the gate. Reverse engineering of the Freshfield view established that Building 1 lies outside the view of the unidentified building – so what could it have been? The “dome” of Building 1 suggested by Casson is much more likely to have been a southern apse (there is no evidence of the completion of the curvature).⁸⁶ Thus, the structure could either have been a bi-apsidal

⁸² Paspates, *The Great Palace*, 124. It should be noted however that Paspates thought the Augusteion to run from the Patriarchate (south-west of Hagia Sophia) parallel to the Hippodrome, and separating it from the Great Palace. Nonetheless, the name *Medrese Sokağı* locates the lane in the vicinity of the Sultan Ahmet Medrese, and thus close to the lane shown in the Freshfield Folio drawing.

⁸³ Map of Istanbul, “Société Anonyme Ottomane d’Études et Enterprise Urbain” (London 1919), British Library cat. Maps 43990 (26.), map 3. The Sultanahmet area is over-stamped “Quartier incendié.”

⁸⁴ Paspates’ attribution appears to continue the confusion between the location of the churches of St. John and Christ Chalkites, caused by both structures having apparently been used as housing for lions; for discussion of this mis-attribution, see Bardill, “The Palace of Lausus”, 67–95.

⁸⁵ By comparison, Justinian’s St. Irene is about 60m long by 33m wide, the sixth century Basilica B at Philippi (before 540) was about 55m long by 27m wide, and the sixth century St. Titus in Gortyna was about 32m long by 20.2m wide; see Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, figs. 164, 169 and 171.

⁸⁶ Evidence that the Building 1 was not domed is suggested by the fact that the supports are piers with a curved inner face, and are only located in the southern half of the implied circle, rather than being arched piers that had supported pendentives. There are very few, and ambiguous examples of Byzantine churches which share this form. One is the so-called “Palace of Bryas”, recently reinterpreted by Ricci as a monastery complex (in which the circular space on the central axis is presumably part of the monastic church). For her analysis of the structure, see A. Ricci, “The Road from Baghdad to Byzantium and the case of the Bryas Palace in Istanbul”, in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Dead or Alive? Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Papers from the 30th Spring Symposium of Byzantine*

annexe of the Baths, or an unknown northern-oriented hall of basilican plan. It is clear that the Church of St. John of the Diippion lay further to the north-west from this site; current analysis of the Freshfield view, combined with the archaeological evidence associated with the kiosk at the northern end of At Meydani, suggests that the church may be placed south of the present-day Mese, but north of the street that bounded the Hippodrome at the time of the Freshfield view, and which appears to have formed the boundary in the 1807 Kauffer-Le Chevalier map. Furthermore, its location may be sought immediately north of the alignment of the tomb of Sultan Ahmet, which has been proposed here to have been the site of the former eastern gate of the Hippodrome (Fig. 50). Confirmation of this thesis will depend upon both further digital topographical modelling, and more comprehensive archaeological surveys, through which the church of St. John Diippion, an important building of the early Byzantine period, may indeed be provisionally located.



Figure 29: View of the north side of the Hippodrome, and of its extant monuments, unknown artist, from Freshfield Folio, Trinity College Cambridge.⁸⁷

Studies, Birmingham, March, 1996 (Surrey 1998), 131–149. The same objection, that such construction is atypical for ecclesiastical buildings, may be made to this attribution.

⁸⁷ All images are the author's or copyrighted and used with the permission of owner. The terms of permission do not allow third party use.

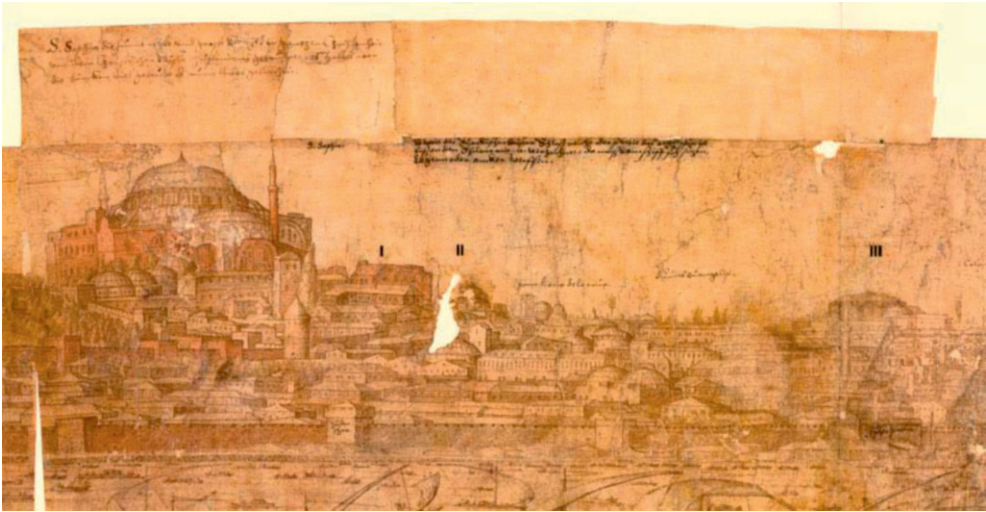


Figure 30: Melchior Lorichs, detail of Panorama of Constantinople showing Hagia Sophia and two churches to its right, library, University of Leiden.

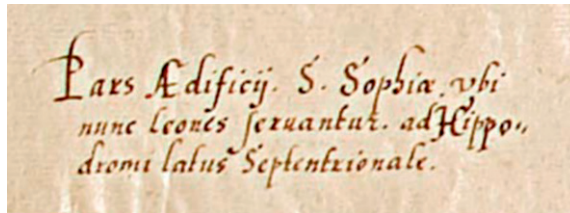


Figure 31: Detail of text, view of Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio.



Figure 32: Buildings to left of Hagia Sophia, Freshfield Folio.

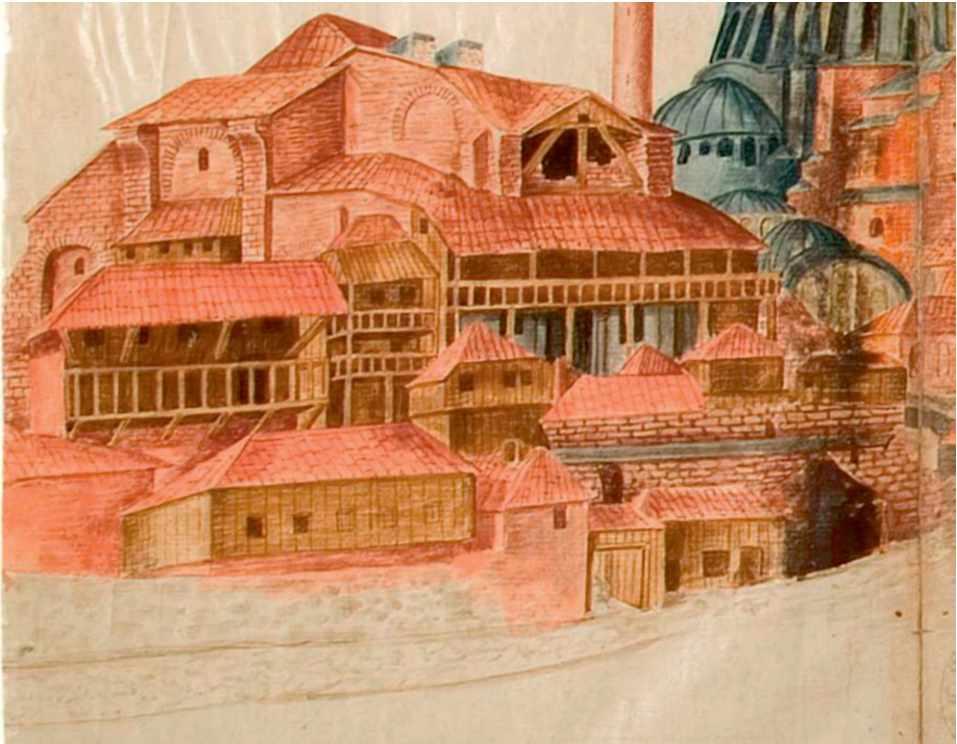


Figure 33: Detail of building housing lions, view of Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio.



Figure 34: Detail of “church” façade, view of Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio.



Figure 35: Detail of domes over galleries of Hagia Sophia, view of Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio.

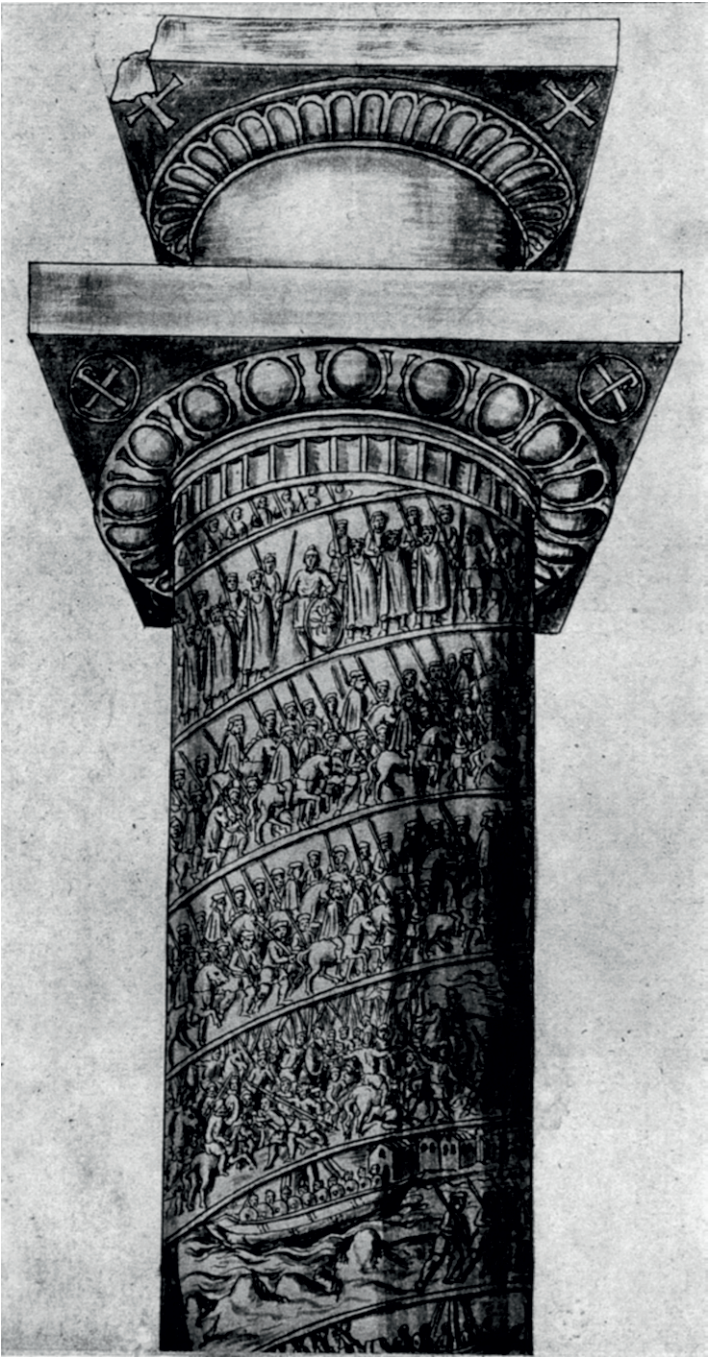


Figure 36: Detail of historiated column of Arcadius, Freshfield Folio.

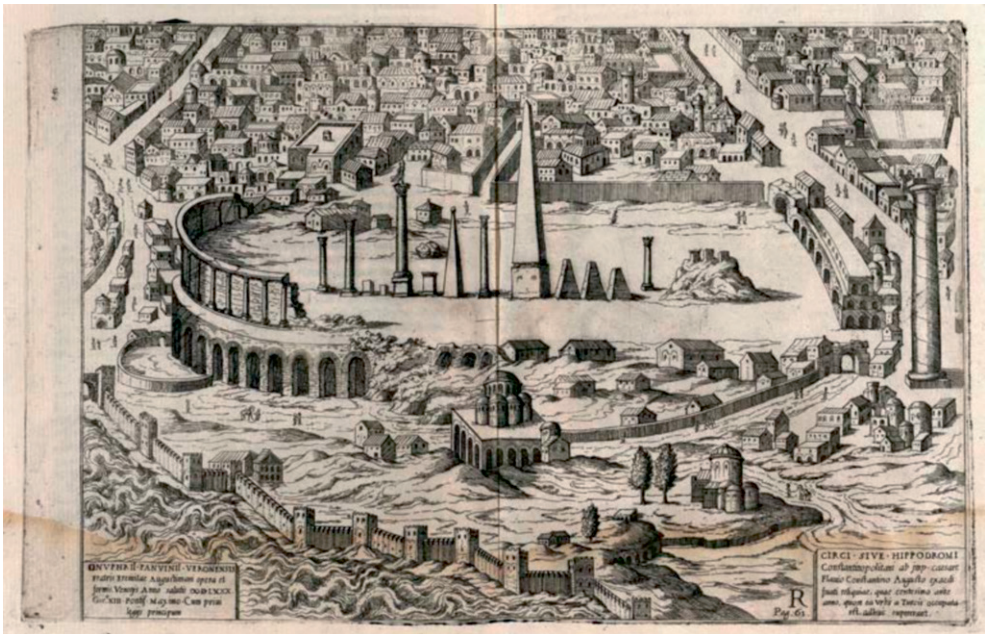


Figure 37: Aerial view of Hippodrome, from O. Panvinio, *De Ludis Circensibus* (Venice, 1600).

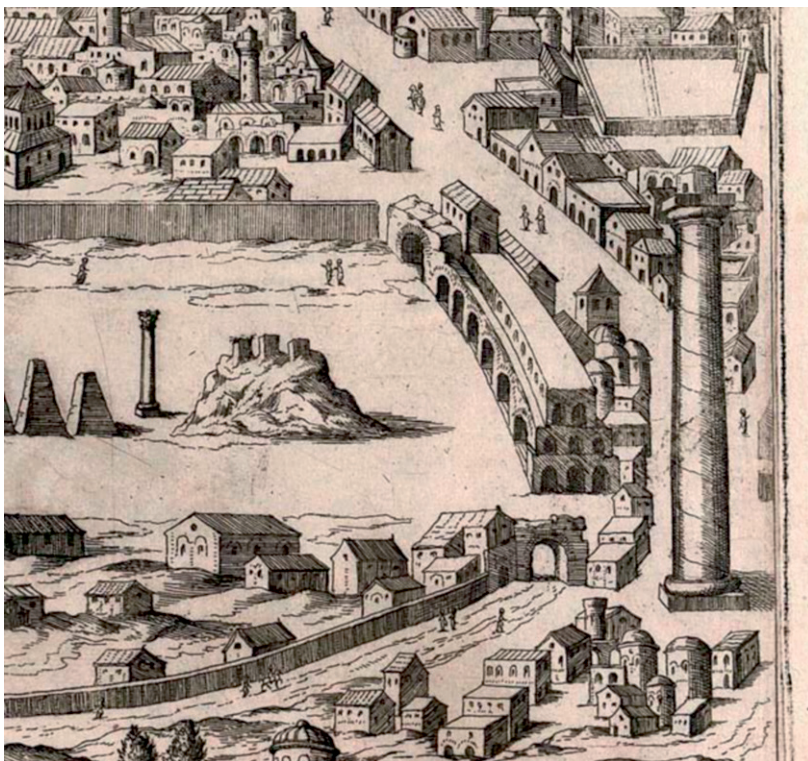


Figure 38: Detail of area of Carceres, Panvinio.



Figure 39: Detail, aerial view of Constantinople by Vavassore, ca. 1530-1550.



Figure 40: Detail of central dome of Hagia Sophia, Freshfield Folio.



Figure 41: View of Hagia Sophia from At Meidan (collection of author).

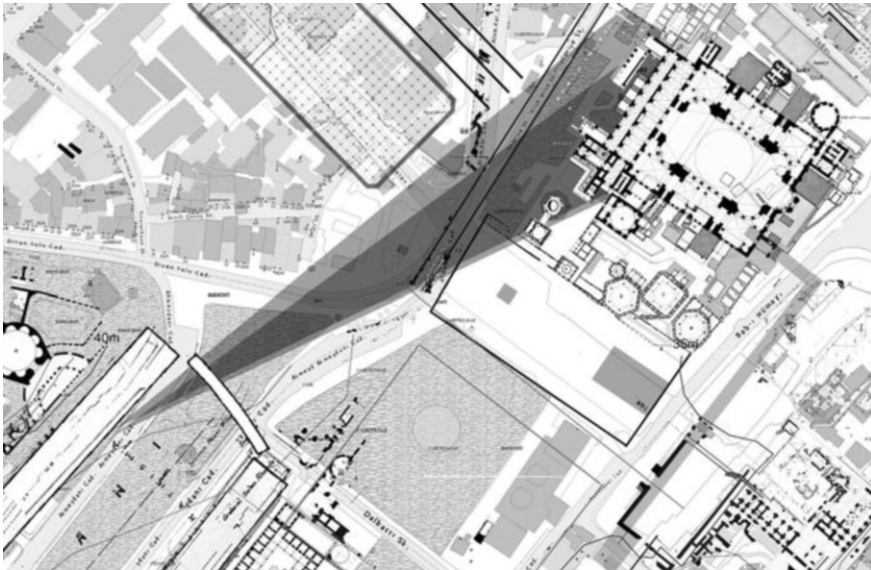


Figure 42: Viewshed diagram of large building to left of Hagia Sophia depicted in view of the Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio (author).



Figure 43: Detail of street corner on eastern side of At Meidan, view of the Hippodrome, Freshfield Folio.

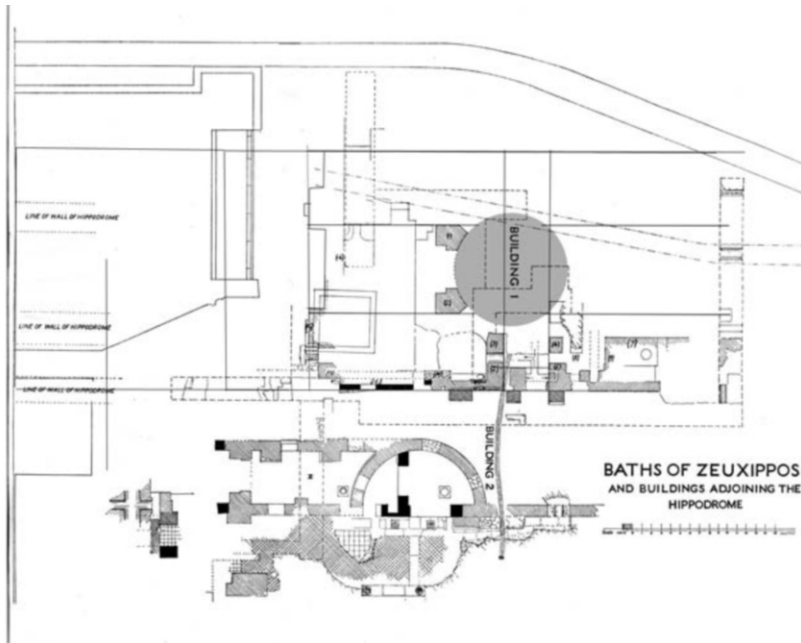


Figure 44: Plan of structure to west of Baths of Zeuxippos (author), based on plan of “Building 1”, S. Casson, *Preliminary report on the excavations carried out in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1927 on behalf of the British Academy* (London 1928). Plan shows curvature of pier structures, and likely alignments of side walls.

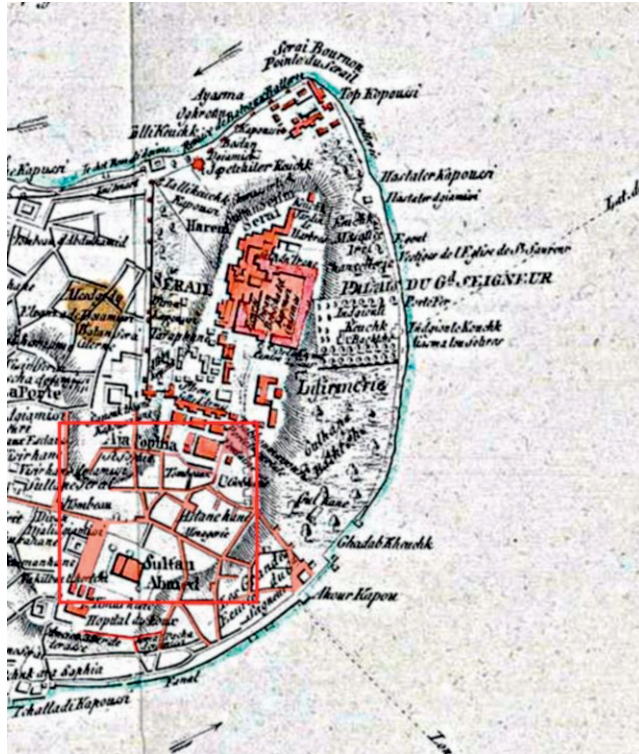


Figure 45: Overlay by author on detail from Kauffer-Le Chevalier map of Istanbul ("Constantinople"), Geographic Institute, Weimar, 1807. Note the roads lying between Hagia Sophia and Sultan Ahmet Mosque (collection of author).

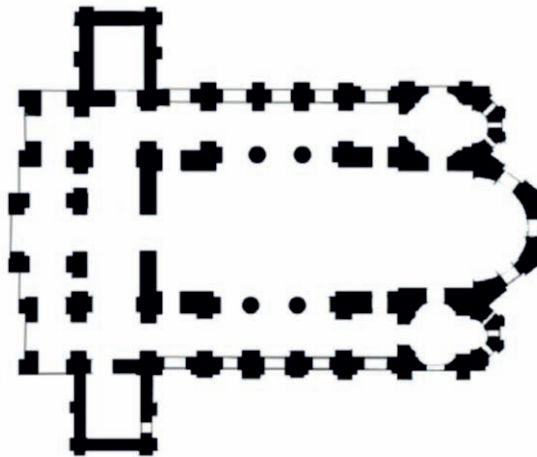


Figure 46: Plan of Byzantine church, Dereagzi, with side chapels omitted (author). Cyril Mango places it provisionally in the late ninth century. C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (N.Y.: Abrams, 1974).

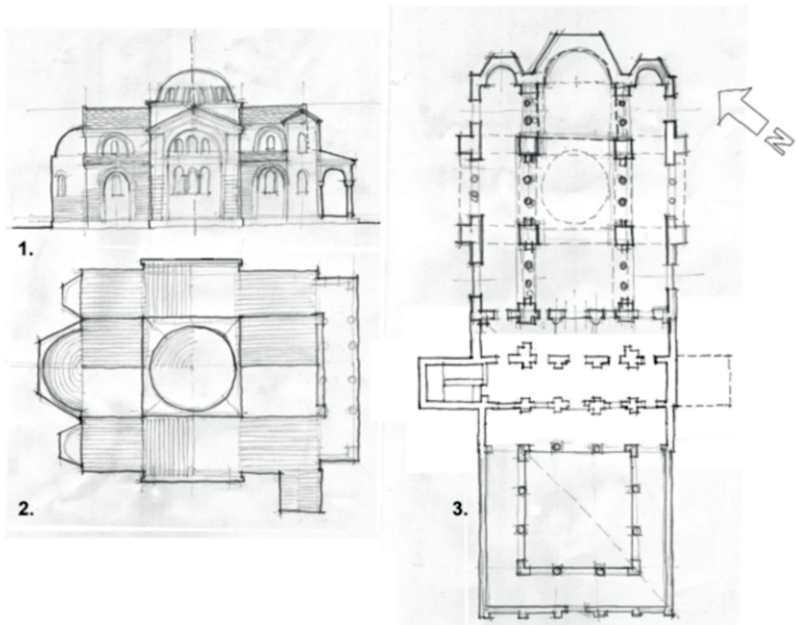


Figure 47: Hypothetical layout of church of St. John Diippion (author).



Figure 48: Proposed location of east–west street with adjacent structures. Overlay by author on 1912 street map of Istanbul.

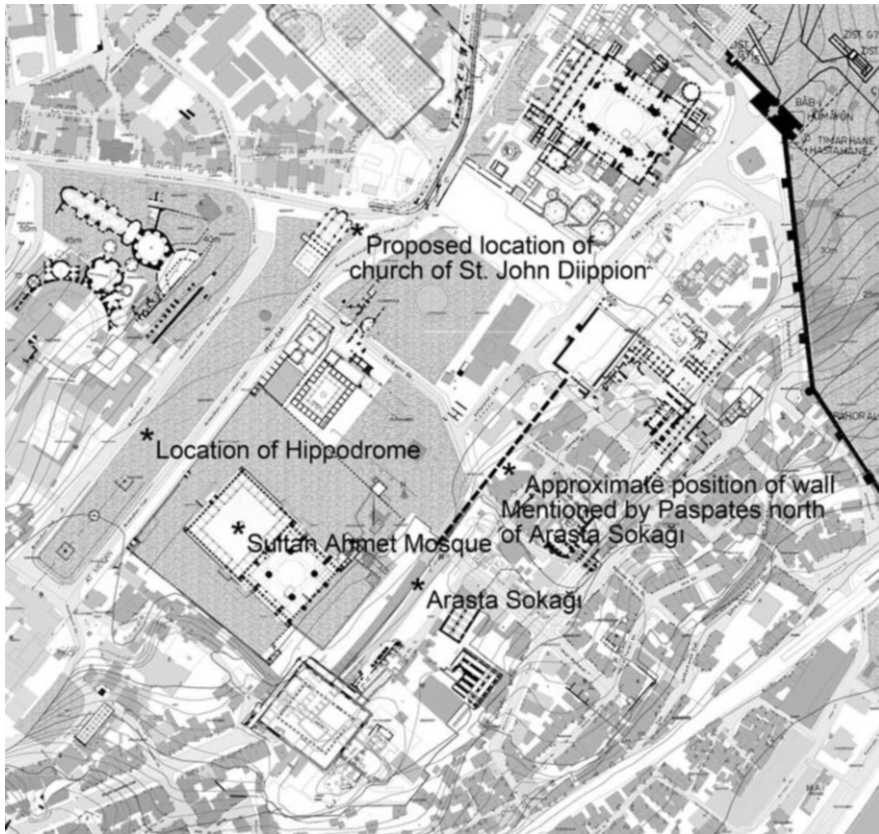


Figure 49: Proposed location of church of St. John Diippion (collection of author).

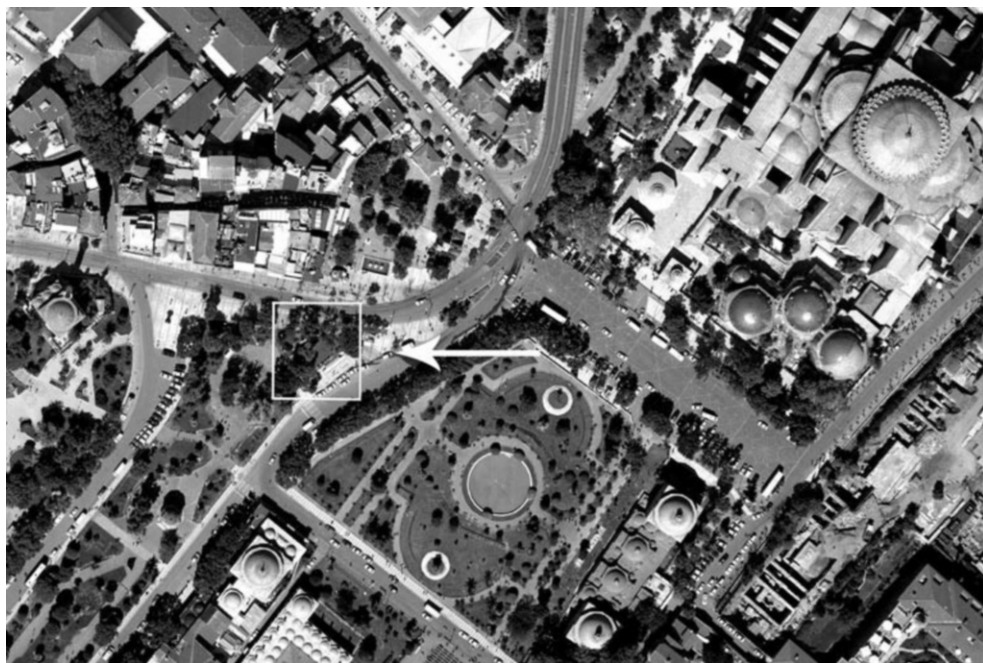


Figure 50: Overlay on aerial photograph of Sultanahmet district, Istanbul, showing location of ruins noted by Mamboury at northern end of At Meidan (collection of author).

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